

YELLE BOOKA SHADE SUBTLE LOCO DICE IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE 77 KLASH

# XLR8R

118  
JUNE/JULY  
2008

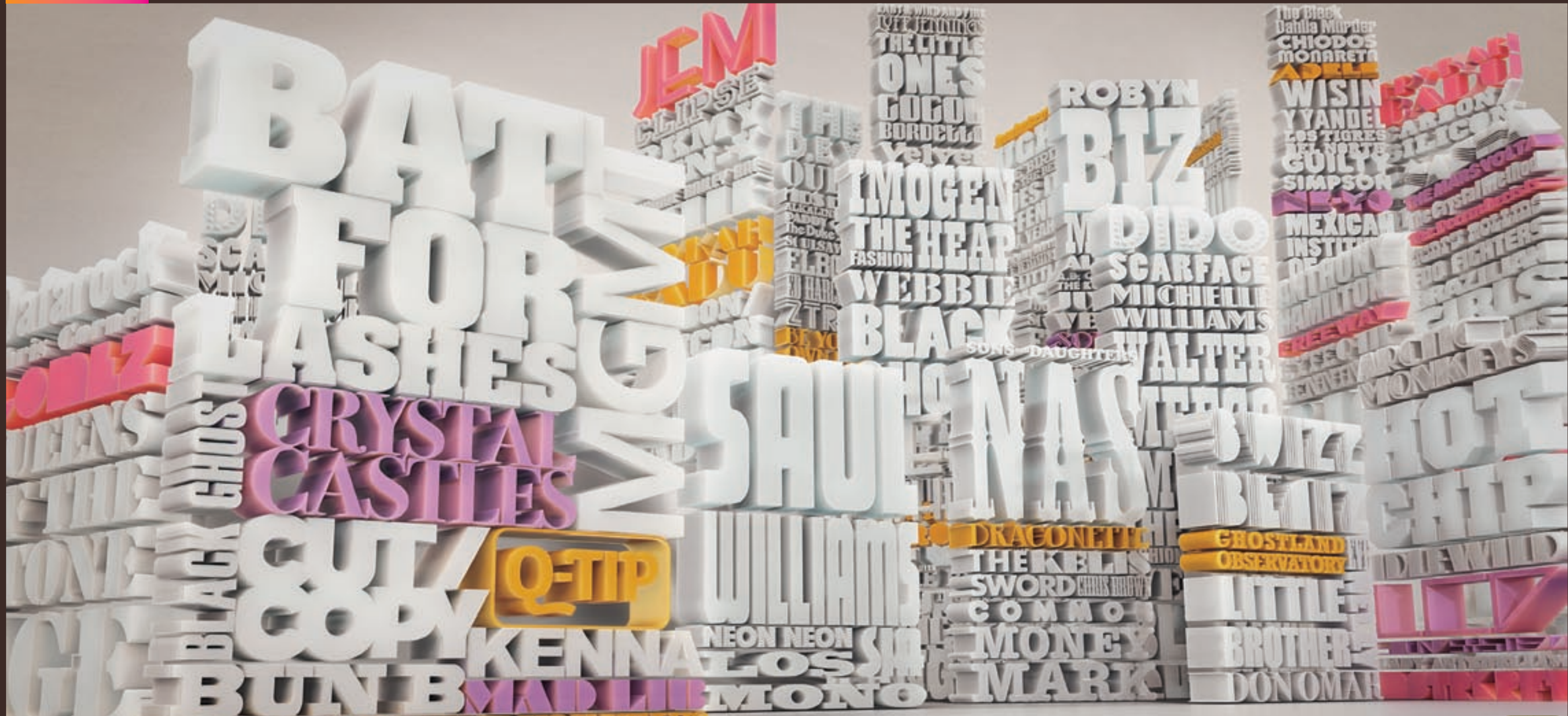
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## Ed's Rant: Summer Jam 2008



Photo Chris Woodcock  
Bryant Rutledge and Lazer Sword cohort Antaeus Roy get buck at our 15-Year Party, Mighty, SF.

Summer is supposed to be a carefree time. A time to crack open a cold one—a cold Stewart's root beer, if you're teetotalin'—and listen to Mistah F.A.B. on your stoop or lay back in the grass and let the sunny waves of deep house roll over you. No doubt there will be some golden days of chillage come July, but with a heated election coming up this fall, housing costs steadily rising, and the U.S. dollar taking a nosedive, something tells me this season isn't going to be all fun and games.

While there's more than enough flippant hip-hop and sunny dance jams to temporarily distract you from the storm and stress—check Yelle's electronic (and very French) take on summery pop if you need some Prozac for the eardrums—it seems that even the happiest genres are being infused with darkness... or at least a touch of melancholy. For instance, this issue's cover stars Hercules and Love Affair patently intend for you to feel good on the dancefloor as their shimmering, classy, and classic disco plays. But lyrically and emotionally their music hints at the pain of love and loss even as it whips the dancefloor into ecstasy and abandon.

Neither is Doseone, leader of the intrepidly experimental Bay Area tribe known as Subtle, a stranger to pain. His band's battles with demons, a debilitating car accident, and gear theft have been well documented, but we're more interested in what happens next. Los Angeles writer Chris Martins traveled to Dose's Oakland command center to find out how obstacles were spun into the enigmatic music on *ExitingARM*, a heady brew that stands at the crossroads of leftfield hip-hop, ambient, folk, and Beach Boys-esque pop.

I've tried to make it through this Ed's Rant without complaining—so much for turning over *that* leaf—but I confess this installment became known around the office as the "Pain in the Ass" issue. Perhaps feeling the stress of modern times, relentless touring, and the weight of the record industry, we lived through more than a few artist- and PR-diva moments whilst making our way from interviews and photo shoots to these final printed pages. Writers seemed to be feeling the strain and flipping out too, making us wonder if Mercury wasn't in permanent retrograde. (Being Californian, we have to insert astrology into every conversation at least once.)

But that's just the way it goes sometimes. Making art and penning myths is a complicated thing, and nothing makes people more mercurial and moody than trying to get the truth out. If anything, this makes us even more thankful when things are easy, and more grateful for the funny moments every issue brings. Tim had dancehall MCs freestyling to him on his voicemail, Jell-o shots were toasted when half the Italians from the Incoming piece touched down in New York at once, and our 15-year anniversary parties in San Francisco (with Blasthaus and Ellen Allien) and New York (with the Fixed and Get Physical crews) were a blast.

In the end, it's nice to see real meaning and emotion in the increasingly vapid musical landscape. If that also entails people being real mean and emotional, then there's one thing to do: crack open that frosty root beer, breathe deeply, and smile.

- Vivian Host, Editor

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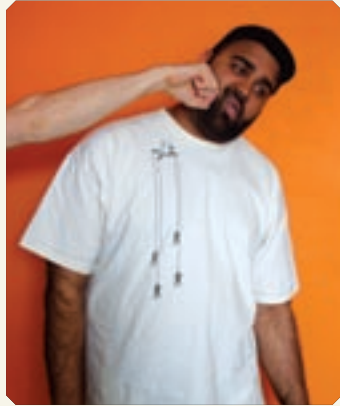
Hercules and Love Affair, photographed by Josh McNey



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Born in Fiji and raised in the wonderfully crime-ridden locale of Stockton, CA, Zoneil Maharaj grew up worshipping an elephant and eating goat brains. Somewhere along the way, he started listening to hip-hop and decided to make a career out of writing about it. What a mistake. Now he's completely broke, interning at *XLR8R* in exchange for sandwiches and opportunities to interview C.R.A.C., and running *Oh Dang!* magazine on the side. He shoulda gone to med school like his parents wanted him to.

[ohdangmag.com](http://ohdangmag.com)



### Ali Gitlow

Reared in the wilds of Miami, Ali Gitlow was made an Honorary Cuban at the tender age of 12 after an unfortunate run-in with the Chupacabra. Magically escaping with her limbs intact, Ali went on to receive her master's degree in Visual Arts Administration from New York University. When not writing about Italian DJs or Japanese club kids for *XLR8R*, she serves as the Managing Editor of *Overspray*, a kick-ass international street-art magazine.

[overspraymag.com](http://overspraymag.com)



### Amanda Lopez

Amanda Lopez is a photographer based in Sacramento, CA. Her photographs have appeared in the pages of *XXL*, *Vibe*, and *Mass Appeal*. Lopez's recent works include shooting look-books for S.F.-based ladies streetwear line Mama, and photographing this month's chola style piece. You can peep more of Amanda's work at [amandalopezphoto.com](http://amandalopezphoto.com) and keep track of her wild and crazy life by visiting her blog below.

[amandalopezphoto.blogspot.com](http://amandalopezphoto.blogspot.com)



### Yego Moravia

Yego Moravia is the rebel creative director and co-creator of 21MC (21st Century Maroon Colony), a design collective and conceptual streetwear company based in SF and NYC. He has been designing custom typography (like you'll see in this month's feature headers) and visuals for your favorite musicians, artists, and tastemakers since he dropped out of high school at age 17. When he isn't designing, he enjoys dub, dominos, traveling, *Nas*, reading, post-colonial theory, *Lil Wayne*, and visualizing black liberation.

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### SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Domestic: \$20 (one year, 10 issues) and \$40 (two years, 20 issues);

Canada: \$40 (one year) and \$80 (two year); all other international: \$50 (one year)

and \$100 (two years). Subscribe by credit card online or send payment to XLR8R

Subscriptions, 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117. Payment made out to

"XLR8R Magazine," US funds only. International orders must be paid by credit card or

international money order. Questions? Email [service@xlr8r.com](mailto:service@xlr8r.com) or subscribe online at

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### BIG THANKS TO...

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at Mackie, Leslie Hermelin, Katherine Deatrick, Frank Nieto at 230 PR, Judy Miller

Silverman, Todd Hyman at Carpark, Sara Rosen, Trevor Seamon, Dennis Paredes at

Public Wizard, Alyssa and Aleix at Girlie Action, Alex Luke at Apple, Guy Licata, Alexandra

Greenberg at MSO, Nicole Balin, and Anna Finch at Quiksilver.



*XLR8R* is printed on 100% recycled fiber EcoMatte Plus and Reincarnation Matte papers, which are manufactured with electricity offset renewable energy certificates.

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## Letters to the Editor

Got something to say? Love us? Hate us? Write us at [letterbox@xlr8r.com](mailto:letterbox@xlr8r.com) or send mail to XLR8R Magazine, 1388 Haight Street #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.



April Issue #116



May Issue #117

### High School Crush

Anthony Gonzalez's obsession with Molly Ringwald is adorable [issue #116, "Teen Dreams"]. Eighties movies never lose their appeal. The cover for *Saturdays=Youth* is almost as good as the album itself. Let's just hope he isn't the next John Cusack stalker!  
*Ariel, via the web*

### Anniversary Love

Still have a few of the early ('92-'93) editions when XLR8R was still in newsprint format... good times. The first editions had a lot of letters to the editor with all that beautiful PLUR shite, when ravers still believed we would save the world. oh, the good ol' daze.  
*A.J., via XLR8R's Facebook page*

### Feeling It

Well done article on Slug in the April issue [issue #116, "More Than a Feeling"]. I can never decide if I like Atmosphere, but I always appreciated Slug's honesty. Not sure if I'd make it to a concert, tho. I'd probably end up feeling guilty for clapping too loud or not clapping loud enough or something.  
*Lauren J., via the web*

### Booty Call

Sweet Baltimore pullout in the Bun B issue last month [issue #116]. It reminded me of the old-old school XLR8R days! Perfect mix of classic and current. You guys should do this more often.  
*Larry, via the web*

### Undead! Undead! Undead!

Fools!  
Your pronouncement that electronica is dead [issue #117, "Entertain Us"] seemed a little silly right next to a story on Portishead. Dead? Really? If it was dead, how come you say right off the top that Moby is still playing and doing his thing (even if it's just at clubs now, instead of stadiums)? Somebody over there

needs to get their shit straight. If bands like Justice and Daft Punk are selling out big halls left and right, how the hell is electronica is dead? Please get your heads out of the sand and explain.  
Love,  
*Jeffery K., via the web*

**Vivian responds:** Notice that we pronounced "electronica" dead, not electronic music. We never liked the term electronica, which was foisted upon us constantly by label and marketing people in the '90s, usually trying to make the "big room" sounds of Chemical Brothers or Fatboy Slim or the latest lounge compilation palatable to a rock audience. We're thrilled that electronic music is considered a legitimate genre now (we were tired of explaining that we're not just some "raver zine"), but you make an interesting point about Justice and their arena-rocking. Sigh... If you stick around long enough I guess everything old is new again.



## XLR8R's "Summer Jam" Contest

Win a new **Mackie d.4 Pro** mixer and the latest from Subtle and Hercules and Love Affair.

Summer's here and to celebrate XLR8R's hitting you with a super-hot contest. First up is the new **Mackie d.4 Pro** production console. Hardly your run-of-the-mill mixer, the d.4 Pro is tricked out with multi-channel/multi-track FireWire computer connectivity, studio-quality sound, vast routing flexibility, Onyx mic preamps, Traktor Scratch compatibility, and more. The d.4 Pro lets you plug in and spin your digital files, or record your sun-drenched sets and productions directly to your laptop. (We can only hope that you'll throw forgotten summer jams like Paperboy's "Ditty" and Skee-Lo's "I Wish" into your mix.) And if that ain't enough, we're also throwing in **Hercules and Love Affair's** self-titled album (Mute) and **Subtle's ExitingARM** (Lex) to bump as your summer soundtrack.

To win, all you have to do is tell us, in 100 words or less, your worst summer vacation experience. The saddest, most deserving sucker wins.

**One grand-prize winner will receive:** A Mackie d.4 Pro mixer, and a copy of Subtle's *ExitingARM* and Hercules and Love Affair's self-titled album.

**Two runners up will each receive:** A copy of Subtle's *ExitingARM* and Hercules and Love Affair's self-titled album.

Entries will be accepted via standard mail and email. Entries must be received by July 22, 2008. Send your entry to XLR8R's "Summer Jam," 1388 Haight St. #105, San Francisco, CA 94117 or email [contest@xlr8r.com](mailto:contest@xlr8r.com) with "XLR8R's Summer Jam" in the subject line.

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## BJ "Bitter" Bastard's Guidelines on What Not to Pitch *XLR8R*

Toiling away in the editorial assistant's chair for far too many years than most would consider healthy, our resident crab, BJ "Bitter" Bastard, has seen his fair share of lame PR spam come through the *XLR8R* press release inbox. Whether it's stories on your horrible band or hip-hop side-project or the stuntwoman you represent or, uh, socks, here's what BJ recommends you don't waste your time pitching us.



### 1. Lame hip-hop

Obviously we love hip-hop—good hip-hop, that is. And you know how we know when it ain't gonna be good? When it comes from a company that calls itself so-and-so Entertainment or so-and-so Productions... and that name is misspelled. This also includes anyone working any artist who tells us they are a genius or insists we review their shit, anyone who tries to convince us we should cover an artist "because *BPM* and *Nylon* have already done articles on them," or anyone whose PR sheet relies on press quotes from Perez Hilton. That's not a selling point.

### 2. Shitty clubs

We may cover club culture, but we rarely cover clubs. Especially not your club. So stop sending us information on your new 80 million-square-foot eco-friendly resto-lounge in SoMa or your Las Vegas shithole that is going to "revolutionize the nightclub experience" with bottle service, "state of the art sound and lighting," and parties

hosted by old Playmates of the Year. No, poolside Kobe sliders will not get us to change our minds. [*Speak for yourself.* — Ed.]

### 3. Useless technology

If you have some niche-y social-networking website that you think is gonna be bigger than MySpace or Facebook, we're just not interested. We already spent too much time farting around on that shit as it is. Same goes for pitching us on MP3-synced dildos and Spinz Pens. Since when is pen-spinning or jacking off in time to Fugazi something we need a special accessory for? We do have hands, you know.

### 4. Bad clothing and accessories

Look, we already go to the trade shows that you can't afford a booth at, so if we gave a damn about your shirts that say "Disco sucks, Funk = Gay, Heavy Metal all the way," you'd know by now. This also means you, Mr. Shutter Shades and Mr. Skull-Screenprinted-on-a-

Blazer. And the next time you want to send us an email entitled "Should we send socks?" simply imagine us answering you with a friendly but firm "Are you fucking joking?"

### 5. Random Interviews

Here's who we interview: musicians, artists, and (very infrequently) authors. Here's who we don't interview: stuntwomen, stars of the new Blu-Ray version of *Rambo*, members of Switchfoot or the Nitty Gritty Dirt Band (though we can see how this might be confusing), CEOs of internet start-ups, self-help gurus, computer-gadget brand consultants, makers of Bach or Beethoven bobbleheads, the singer/songwriter of the "new classic song 'Happy Mothers Day'" (again, we admit this could get confusing), and organizers of food festivals—even if they are Edwin McCain.





**CONVERSE** 

# Loco Dice

A German anti-minimalist tries techno's luck in Berliniamsburg.

**"I didn't put any stickers or graffiti on the door,"** says Düsseldorf's Loco Dice, discussing the tagged turquoise portal gracing the cover of *7 Dunham Place*, his debut LP named after the Brooklyn address where it was recorded. "That door lived on its own, and entering that door changed my life... So I had to record the door as it happened."

Truth be told, Dice is not much one for applying tags of any sort. "Minimal" is a word often applied to Loco Dice records, but Dice claims that unless you're Richie Hawtin or Robert Hood, the term is likely being misused. Certainly, one single on Minus (2006's class "Seeing Through Shadows") shouldn't mark you a minimalist. A more appropriate designator—if anything is to be taken from Loco Dice releases on Cadenza, Cocoon, and Ovum—is contemporary deep house, with integrants condensed from Chicago's jackin', Detroit's friction, Ibiza's tribalism, and G-funk's *lean*.

Loco Dice (or just Dice, his real first

name) came up in the late '90s as a DJ enamored of intimate sunrise sessions and terrace parties (largely at Düsseldorf's Tribehouse and Ibiza's DC10); he quickly found himself among similarly long-form techno peers, including Sven Väth, Luciano, Ricardo Villalobos, and Hawtin. Eventually, he met his production partner, Hanover-based Martin Buttrich (who doesn't quite get the same marquee credit). Since the pair's first collaboration, 2002's "Phat Dope Shit," Dice and Buttrich have striven to imbue each single with a distinct sense of place. "I love dynamics that are not too dry, that are wet like the way you feel the sweat of the people in the air of a club," says Dice.

To assemble *7 Dunham Place*, Dice and Buttrich moved into a creaky Williamsburg loft, shipping over their key equipment in a container that was lost for a month in harbor customs. Once their equipment was recovered, the duo holed up with white wine and pasta, \$2 slices, and PlayStation soccer to fuel their 12-hour days, then set about

translating the flush of displacement and pleating the energy of their international travels into tracks.

"We talked a lot about how to rearrange the classic vibes and everyday new impressions to hit the fresh groove," says Dice, a former hip-hop DJ, breakdancer, and MC. "I like when tracks can one minute refresh my memory and another make a new memory."

The nine-track end result—self-released on Loco Dice's Desolat label—respects true minimal's streamlined circuits but expresses no interest in its anonymity. From the aqueous plonk of "Breakfast at Nina's" to the Balearic chords of "La Esquina" to the resonant chatter of "M Train to Brooklyn," *7 Dunham Place* offers low-compression, high-concept art direction that maintains its own identity even as it strengthens that of Loco Dice.

Loco Dice's *7 Dunham Place* is out now on Desolat. [locodice.com](http://locodice.com)

# Spank You

Kawaii fashionistas **Spank! Girls** bring pink power to Tokyo's streetwear scene.



If you have ever pored over photographer Shoichi Aoki's *Fruits* books, which depict cool Japanese kids showing off outlandish styles in the Shibuya streets, you're probably already in love with the **Spank! Girls**. This group of Tokyo-based 20-somethings has three shops where they sling secondhand clothes alongside original designs that celebrate the sweetest and cutest pop detritus of 1980s America; Popples, My Little Pony, JEM, Barbie, Michelle from *Full House*,

Madonna, and Cyndi Lauper are all inspirations. As 26-year-old proprietor Tabuchi Sayuri puts it, "A girl with the pink heart is unrivaled!"

In May 2004, Sayuri opened her first store, Spank!, in Tokyo's Koenji region, which is home to a plethora of secondhand shops. In July 2006, she opened two more shops: Spank Me! in Shibuya and Chelsea in Nagoya (which will reopen soon in another location). A band of merry hipstresses serve as staff,

dishing out fashion advice and making unique garments under brand names like Tabuchinas Banana and Crazy Bunny.

The Spank! Girls also throw their own raucous parties, where Sayuri and the manager of Spank Me! play records—favorite artists include Helen Love, Le Tigre, Nikki and the Corvettes, Gravy Train!!!, and Toxic Lipstick—while the other girls don leotards and dance. Not surprisingly, they have also formed a band and hope to perform live soon.

Sayuri also aspires to sell their original creations overseas, a reasonable goal considering the current renewed interest in Japanese street style. With the recent release of Tiffany Godoy's book *Style Deficit Disorder: Street Fashion Tokyo* (in which the Spank! Girls are featured) and the *Fruits*-inspired documentary DVD *Tokyo Streets*, it appears Japan's extreme street fashion can still intrigue and amuse the rest of the planet.

[spankworld.jp](http://spankworld.jp)

# Fantom G

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**Tour Diary** The Grouch

A **Living Legends** crew member raps and eats his way through the Southwest.



4/20, BRAHL IN INDIO, CA \ PHOTO: STEPHEN BROOKS



AT THE ROXY, L.A. \ PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE

**Sunday, April 6: Reno, NV**  
I flew into Reno from Burbank with a short layover in Oakland and saw my old-school homey DJ True Justice. We talked about new ways to sell music and who could fall asleep faster on a plane. He did. My boys Buddha and Dot.com run

a sandwich shop in Reno (as well as a successful underground hip-hop show on commercial radio!). I had the healthiest thing on the menu, then met up with Zion I at the venue. Fabby Davis (a.k.a. Mistah F.A.B.) killed it with a 10-minute acapella freestyle for the night's grand finale!

**Tuesday, April 8: Hollywood, CA**  
Asop (of Living Legends) suggested we do an in-store at Amoeba L.A. and then didn't even show up! About 600 kids crowded the rows of the store to watch Legends and me do a few cuts off our new releases that both dropped

today (*The Gathering and Show You the World*). Perfect timing. Murs was so happy he had to jump up and touch his toes! We signed autographs for two-and-a-half hours. Damn, it feels good to be a gangster. Amoeba gave me \$75 credit and I spent my whole thing on the new Jose James CD.

**Wednesday, April 9: Los Angeles, CA**  
Daddy Kev throws a weekly at the Airliner in Los Angeles with dope resident DJs like D Styles, Flying Lotus, edIT, and Gaslamp Killer. I did my record release party there with DJ Fresh on the tables. Abstract Rude and Scarub

came through, and a lot of the folks knew the words to the new songs already. The album just came out yesterday! Hmm, illegal downloads? My daughter Rio has got to eat, y'all!



SOMEWHERE NEAR TUSCON PHOTO: BRAD SCOFFERN



GROUCH, RZA, & WIVES PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE



ME AND DJ FRESH \ PHOTO: ERIK VOAKE



MURS AT AMOeba L.A.

**Sunday, April 20: Indio, CA**  
4/20, dude! Many chances to smoke that good purple shit. I only smoke on rare occasions—usually at home with my wife so I can just go to sleep if I get paranoid. Dope turnout, the fans had a nice energy, and seemed hungry for hip-hop out there in the desert. I spoke to Myka Nine about the Jose James remake of "Park Bench People" and his ridiculous freestyle on G4 TV.

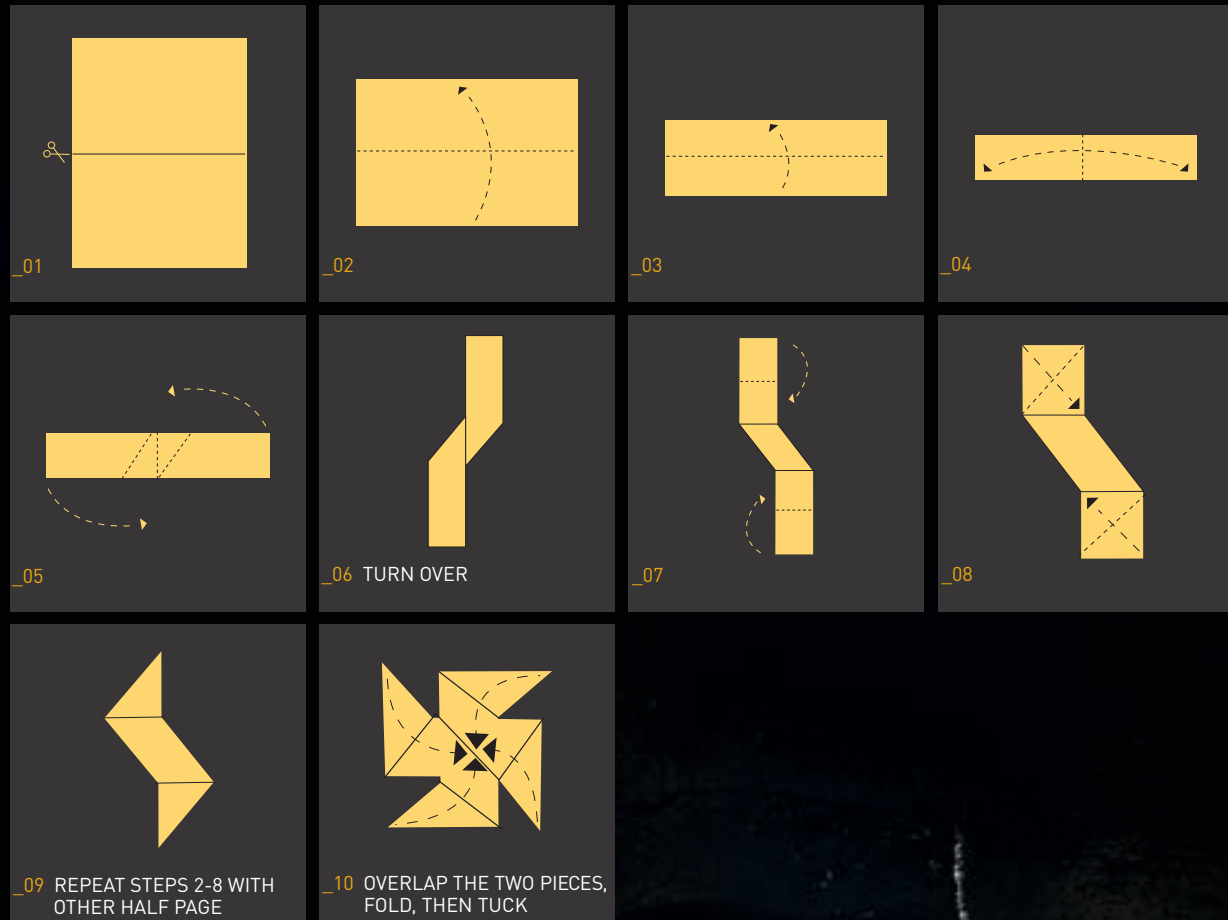
**Monday, April 21: Tucson, AZ**  
We drove my veggie oil/biodiesel-powered Ford F350 to Tucson (oxymoron, I know). My first show with Collie Buddz of about five. I bet he had a good one the night before (4/20... "Finally the herbs come around")! I ate at the Cup Cafe at Hotel Congress—coconut curry tofu and vegetables over couscous. I'm on the health tip, man. My brother Brad the Merch Guy "hossed"

(that's what we call driving long distances in the truck) all the way back to L.A. (503 miles) in six hours! Serious business.  
**Tuesday, April 22: Los Angeles, CA**  
I played at The Roxy, Sunset Strip—legendary spot. I drove up with my wife and DJ Fresh without a minute to spare and hopped on stage. The whole front of the crowd was fully into it, but I had to convince some of

Collie's fans. Shout out to the soundman, who said he's been a Legends listener for years. My boy Tone brought me a new DJ Khalil beat CD. Heat! To top the night off RZA was in the house!

The Grouch's *Show You the World* is out now on [Legendary Music](http://LegendaryMusic.com). [therealgrouch.com](http://therealgrouch.com)

Tear out the opposite page  
and cut in half.



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what moves you

**Clothes Captioned**

# Twelve Bar

London expats turn their music-and-movie obsession into a line of pared-down streetwear

"Twelve Bar is a reference to the rhythm pattern all modern music comes from," explains Nick Jackson of the brand he runs with fellow Londoner Damien Webster. Since launching in mid-2005, Twelve Bar's all-grown-up streetwear collections have referenced music that inspires the owners (at the moment, that includes Roy Ayers, D'Angelo, Phonte, and Happy Mondays); a blog on their website continues the theme, with long-form essays about favorite albums from Four Tops and Air. When asked to explain this summer's look, Jackson, who now operates out of a Twelve Bar outpost on L.A.'s Fairfax Avenue, again brings the music back. "If you mixed 'For the Love of You' by The Isley Brothers with a hot, sticky August night in Brooklyn, then added a bit of St. Tropez flavor and threw in the colors of a lychee martini, you'd come out with our summer collection," he enthuses. In between chasing around the office mascot, a stray dog from Tijuana named Wampa, Jackson also gave us a behind-the-scenes look at Twelve Bar's current movie-inspired pieces. *Tyra Bangs*

twelvebar.com



**The Lebowski Shirt (\$90)**  
The bowling shirt, for obvious reasons, is called the Lebowski as a nod to *The Dude*.

**Expensive Shit (\$36)**  
Named after one of the baddest men ever to hit the stage, *Fela Kuti*. He was more than a musician, he was a force. This shirt is a show of our appreciation to the man and his music.

**Newman denim (\$175)**  
Classic, like the man it was named after: *Paul Newman*.

**Summer of Love (\$30)**  
We love the French-French kissing, cheese, wine, and sex during the day—so we decided to make a shirt celebrating the country and their graphic design.

**Cassidy shirt (\$90)**  
Even though this is a western shirt, it's not inspired by *Brokeback Mountain* but rather by the classic movie *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*.

**Poitier Utility short (\$100)**  
As random as this sounds, it does make sense! The *Poitier* is inspired by the *Sidney Poitier* movie *Shoot to Kill* because it takes place in the woods.

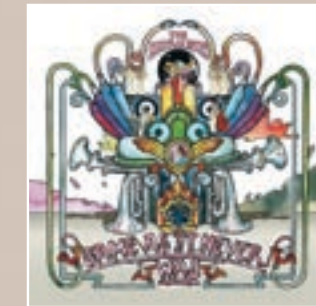
# LISTEN TO THIS AD!

**Quiet Village**



Silent Movie

**Herbaliser**



Same As It Never Was

**Kid Creole**



Going Places: The August Darnell Years 1974-1982

**Booka Shade**



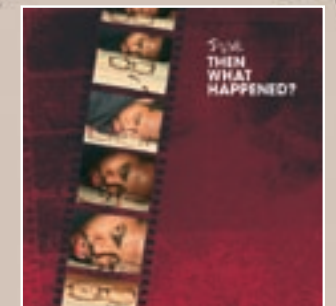
The Sun & The Neon Light

**Nôze**



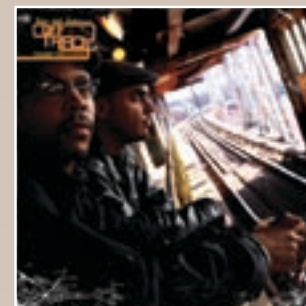
Songs on the Rocks

**J-Live**



Then What Happened?

**Kon & Amir**



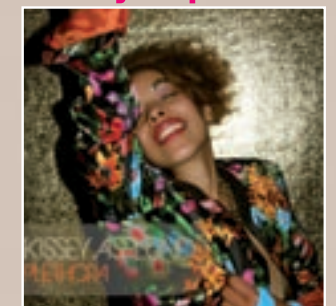
Off Track Vol. 2: Queens

**Brooklyn Academy**



Bored of Education

**Kissey Asplund**



Plethora

**Disco Italia**



Essential Italian Disco 1977-1985 (V/A)

**Nigeria 70**



Lagos Jump (V/A)

**Bowie Covered**



Life Beyond Mars (V/A)

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# Lexie Mountain Boys

Baltimore grrrls make noise for the end of the world.



**Listening to the Lexie Mountain Boys makes one wonder if music just didn't up and die sometime in the past decade.**

It's as if a bomb leveled Baltimore, killing nearly everyone and their recorded music with one fell swoop, save for a small tribe of B-more club obsessives and a fading collective memory. From this post-apocalyptic scrap heap might arise something like Lexie Mountain Boys' "future music."

The five women that comprise the group—Lexie Mountain, Sam Garner, Amy Waller, Amy Harmon, and Katherine Hill—shuffle, stomp, and improvise sprawling, self-contained harmonic vocal arrangements that draw off what feels like the whole of American music: from club music to girl groups to post-everything avant-garde composition. Their spontaneous eruptions bridge the joyfully ridiculous with that primitive *something* that lies at the soul of all music. There's an altogether different world, evident upon listening to an early tape of theirs that consists of 30 minutes of laughing, crying, and barfing. "We don't

actually acknowledge any vocal scale," offers Lexie Mountain (a.k.a. Lexie Macchi), over dinner at a neighborhood pasta bar in Baltimore.

The group's first wide release, this month's *Sacred Vacation* (Carpark), is not only startlingly listenable in a genuine pop sense, but just damn fun—like, loopy dancing and beach-bonfire fun. It makes you think of the first time you heard Animal Collective—that grin-inducing, head-clearing freedom—or, for that matter, early punk. That's the kind of freedom that makes Lexie Mountain Boys one of the most legit, truly bold things in experimental music. "We can do whatever we can think of to do," the lead Lexie says of the music they create from what's been given to them naturally—voices, feet, and hands.

*Sacred Vacation* is based on pure improvisation, "the result of a long process of us being together and recognizing the various strains of songs, and finding familiarity [with each other]," Macchi says. LMB recorded the album in one day in a cavernous old church hall of worn wood floors, boarded stained

glass, and crumbling stone walls. The only effect on the record is an acoustic echo with so much history and personality it feels like a member of the band. "We just had confidence in freaking out; we didn't practice at all before [recording]," she says.

It follows that the shows are uniquely *fuck everything* experiences, from the "hairy rain-bro" show (painting rainbows on a club's walls with paint-dipped hair) and the "golden ball" (kicking a gold spray-painted ball for percussion) to human pyramids and surfing (then collapsing) on a dining room table in Boston.

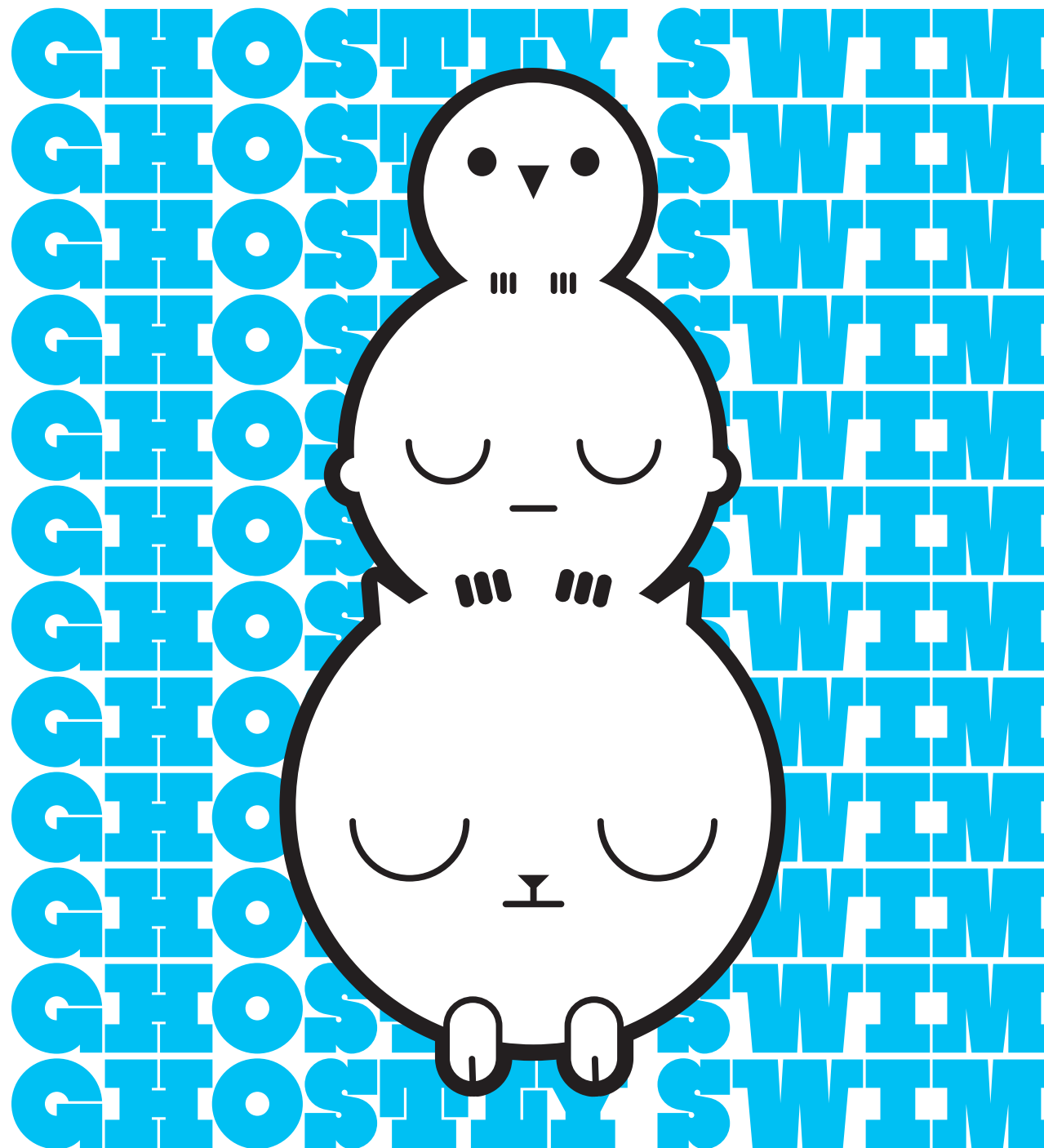
The latter was a total accident, but accidents don't mean quite the same thing in the Lexie Mountain Boys universe. "[With] every one of our shows, you never really know if it's going to fall off a deep end," says Macchi, listing off a litany of assorted near catastrophes. "If you have a song, it's never *really* a failure, unless your equipment fails."

Lexie Mountain Boys' *Sacred Vacation* is out June 10 on Carpark. [myspace.com/mountainlex](http://myspace.com/mountainlex)



CLOCKWISE FROM BOTTOM LEFT: AMY HARMON, AMY WALLER, KATHERINE HILL, SAM GARNER, LEXIE MACCHI

To see some LMB live performances, visit [XLR8R.com/118extras](http://XLR8R.com/118extras).



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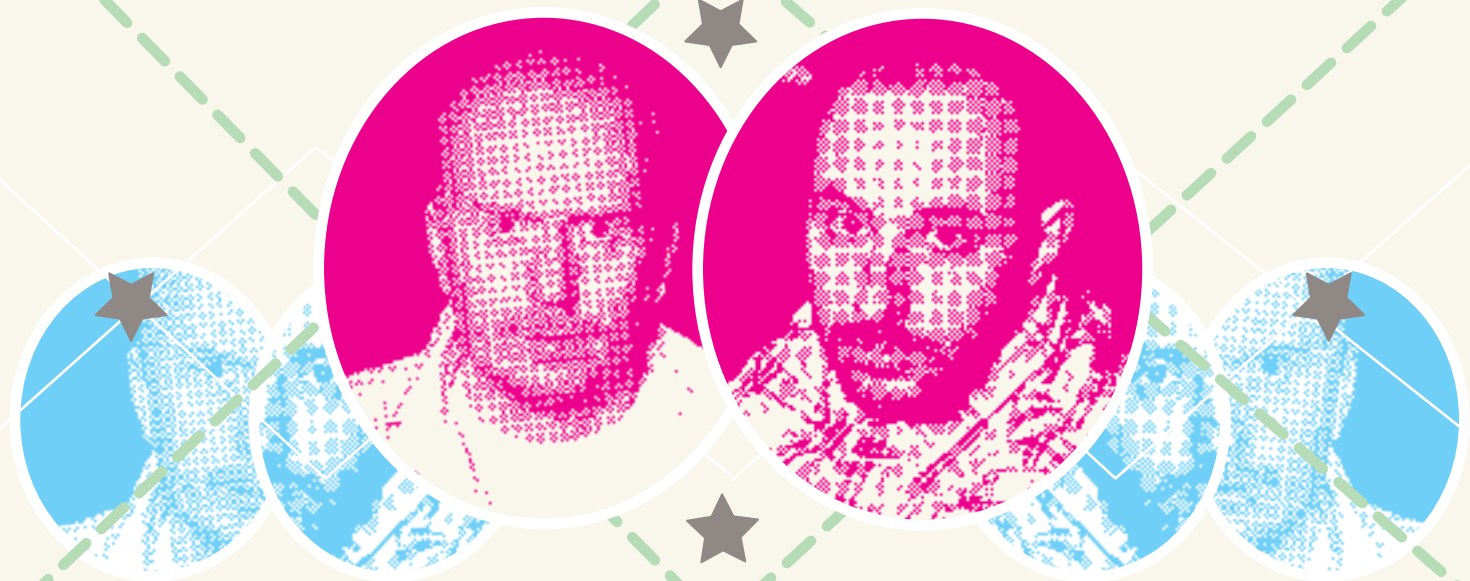


Five Star

# Quiet Village

Techno-lovin' soundtrackers Matt "Radioslave" Edwards and Joel Martin explore their favorite movie scores.

\*\*\*\*\*



**Halloween, 1978**

This is a movie that never loses any of its power, much of which is derived from the monumental score. John Carpenter realized his ultimate vision as an auteur in 1978 by not only writing and directing the movie, but by composing the soundtrack (along with Alan Howarth). You know what's in store when you hear the pulsing drum machine and minimal synth chords. I still have to look behind the curtains to check that Michael isn't waiting there.



**Once Upon a Time in the West, 1969**

The sheer scale of this picture, accompanied by the Ennio Morricone score, truly affected my soul. The real magic occurs when his compositions play alongside the operatic visuals of Sergio Leone. From the muted, almost-dub harmonica solos to the spacious string passages, this is as emotive as it gets.



**Wild Side, 1995**

A twisted thriller by cult director Donald Cammell that stars Christopher Walken, the ultra-sleazy Steven Bauer, Anne Heche, and the sultry Joan Chen, complete with a hauntingly beautiful Ryuichi Sakamoto score, which to this day has never been released. The exquisite electronic pads that the composer utilizes are so well matched to the film's stark and seductive atmosphere that it makes for compulsive and dangerous viewing.



**Excalibur, 1981**

I'm not really a fantasy-genre fanatic, but this goes deeper than the rest in many ways. *Excalibur* moves you simply because it deals in the very essence of the human condition—friendship and betrayal, love and hatred, life and death—backed by a perfectly chosen classical score. Everyone is familiar with Carl Orff's majestic "O Fortuna" (the Old Spice theme), but the way that director John Boorman uses Richard Wagner's music is genius.



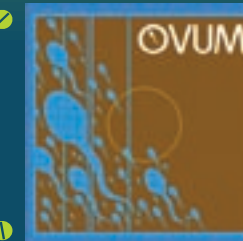
**American Gigolo, 1980**

Giorgio Moroder was the only man fit enough for the task of creating the ultimate L.A. soundscape, and he utilizes the disco formula like a pro. The machine-made music marries perfectly with the characters' coke-stoned compartment as they manipulate and deceive each other with the precision of conscience-free androids.

Quiet Village's *Silent Movie* is out now on !K7. [myspace.com/quietvillage](http://myspace.com/quietvillage)

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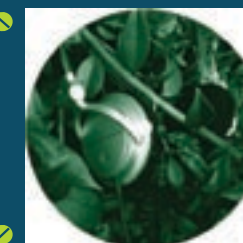
**ARTIST** Josh Wink  
**RELEASE** 'Stay Out All Night'  
**LABEL** Ovum

"This is the prelude to Josh Wink's upcoming artist album, due later this year, which will once again blur the lines of house music. The style? Wink goes against the current musical grain and pairs NYC 90's house with Chicago jackin' beats and a bit of St. Germain. 'The tune that I think should be the biggest dance record in the world right now. It will be, trust me... Sensational.'" – Pete Tong



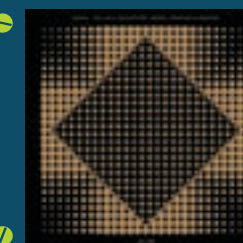
**ARTIST** Ellen Allien  
**RELEASE** 'SOOL'  
**LABEL** Bpitch Control

"Welcome to the Allien world. 'SOOL' is subtle, mysterious, and minimal. 'SOOL' is the new fourth solo album by Ellen Allien."



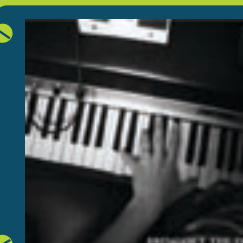
**ARTIST** Ane Brun  
**RELEASE** 'Headphone Silence'  
**LABEL** Objektivity

"'Headphone Silence' launches the 'Ane Brun Objektified' full length album project with Henrik Schwarz's rework as edited by Dixon and Dennis Ferrer. To follow, remixes by Dennis Ferrer, Dixon, Quentin Harris, Karizma, Jerome Sydenham and The Martinez Brothers."



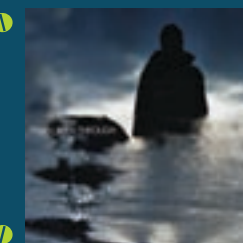
**ARTIST** Sasha  
**RELEASE** 'The emFire Collection: Mixed, Unmixed & Remixed'  
**LABEL** emFire

"Over two hours of music featuring remixes and originals from Sasha's new emFire label, plus his award winning movie score from 'New Emissions Of Light & Sound'... proof that Sasha has found his inner techno." - Mixmag



**ARTIST** IMPS (aka Minilogue & Decoy)  
**RELEASE** 'Bring Out The IMPS'  
**LABEL** Mule Electronic

"A collaboration between Minilogue and two jazz musicians from Melbourne, Australia, this song was recorded during a two week long jam session where everything was recorded live. The aim was to capture the feeling of live performed acoustic instruments mixed with electronic craziness. The result shows how much can be done with open minds and shit loads of toys in a big studio."



**ARTIST** Fenin  
**RELEASE** 'Been Through'  
**LABEL** Shitkatapult

"Lars Fenin has been a Shitkatapult artist right from the start. His first EP 'Container' already displayed his unique dub techno trademark sound in the late nineties. Several EPs and one wonderful album later, Shitkatapult proudly presents his second album 'Been Through' which steps out of the dub techno circus to involve much more."

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**NI** NATIVE INSTRUMENTS

# Elements: Hot Hot Heat

Summer accessories  
so cool you'll have to  
throw shade.

Compiled by Ali Gitlow



1. Tokidoki x Onitsuka Tiger mid-top shoe (\$150)  
tokidoki.com, onitsukatiger.com

2. Stereo Panda Lunettes belt (€65)  
stereopanda.com

3. Monsieur T Dada t-shirt (\$29)  
monsieurt.net

4. Sixpack Shail Sha t-shirt (€65)  
sixpack.fr

5. Quiksilver Maple Valley hat (\$28)  
quiksilver.com

6. Boosted Stiloso headphones (\$52)  
boostedmobile.com

7. Quiksilver Regal Hi shoe (\$70)  
quiksilver.com

8. Anneke Van Bommel ring (\$30)  
thesouvenirshop.ca

9. FLUD 33 1/3 watch (\$59)  
fludwatches.com

10. On Tour Cyclone t-shirt (€39)  
ontour.nl

11. Cake Geometry t-shirt (\$34)  
cakeclothing.com

12. Monster Factory Douglas toy (\$50)  
monsterfactory.net

13. Madgirlnancy Atari bag (£53)  
madgirlnancy.com



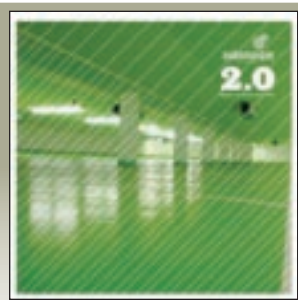
**ARGY**  
*Focus On: Argy CD/2LP*

Following **Guido Schneider**'s enigmatic *Focus On* album last year, this latest installment presents future-classic tracks by **Argy**, and features a smattering of new and exclusive productions and some devastating peak-time collaborations with **Solomon**, **The Mole** & **Jerome Sydenham** – an impeccable mix of modern techno and house music by one of its rising stars.



**BRUNO PRONSATO**  
*Why Can't We Be Like Us CD/LP*

The second full-length release by Seattle's **Bruno Pronsato** embodies his old passion for playing the drums in addition to his love of ones and zeros, but instead of creating streamlined minimal, he has more of an abstract sound in mind, one that lives on a dark, organic note. Everything sounds like Bruno plays it himself, and keenly follows the dictum of **Sun Ra** – "I am an instrument."



**ADULTNAPPER**  
*Audiomatique Volume 2.0 CD*

After the undeniable excellence of *Audiomatique Vol. 1.0*, mixed by venerable label **don Martinez**, it's time for the masters to reclaim their techno crown with a second label compilation, this time seamlessly blended by NYC's arch-selector, **Adultnapper**. *2.0* is a descent into the deepest realms of electronic rhythm, featuring tracks by **Gui Boratto**, **Trentemøller**, **Robert Babicz**, **Joris Voorn** and more.



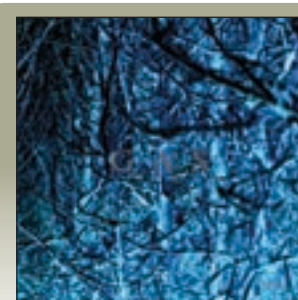
**VARIOUS ARTISTS** *Nigeria Rock Special: Psychedelic Afro-Rock & Fuzz Funk in 1970s Nigeria CD/2LP*

Soundway strikes again with another stunning Afrobeat compilation, this time focusing on the bands caught up in the wave of psych and prog that was rocking Europe during the late '60s and '70s. Spurred on by **Ginger Baker**'s visits to Lagos, fuzzed-out sounds were created by bands **Ofege**, **The Action 13**, **Question Mark**, **BLO** and others.



**BENGA**  
*Diary of an Afro Warrior CD/3LP*

**Benga** is one of the original dubstep pioneers, and *Diary...* is one of the most anticipated albums of the year. Poised to break out in 2008 much like **Burial** in 2007, and already buoyed by the UK underground smash single "Night," his productions have deservedly been compared to such luminaries as **Carl Craig**, **Underground Resistance**, **Reprazent** and **Massive Attack**. Simply dazzling.



**GAS**  
*Nah Und Fern 4CD/2LP*

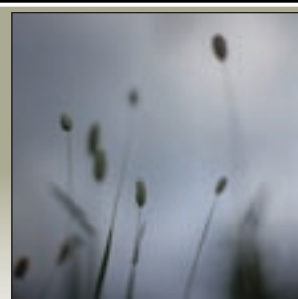
The Kompakt label presents one of the most clamored-for reissues in recent memory – a deluxe package containing all four albums by **Gas**, Kompakt co-founder and co-owner **Wolfgang Voigt**'s legendary acid-ambient project and a cornerstone of the Kompakt sound which still shines through to this day. This 4CD box comes in a stylish package containing 4 small art prints. Essential.



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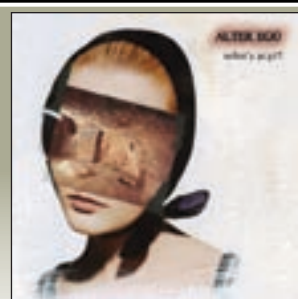
**PETER BRODERICK**  
*Float CD/LP*

*Float* is the debut release from **Peter Broderick**, a rare musician who is perfectly suited to any instrument he cares to try. With that skill he crafts a sound that blends his love of folk music, classical and indie-pop. One comparison for his sound may be **Efterklang** (with whom he performs with), but **Max Richter**, **Sylvain Chauveau** and the Oregon scene that birthed him also shines through.



**GROUPER**  
*Dragging A Dead Deer Up A Hill CD/LP*

Third full-length release from **Liz Harris**, and while she has already won over a fan base with her first two records, for *Dragging A Dead Deer Up A Hill*, she's toned down the fuzz boxes and embraced a dream-pop sound that is sure to appeal to fans of **Slowdive** and the **Cocteau Twins**. Breathtaking.



**ALTER EGO**  
*What's Next?! CD*

*Why Not?!* saw **Alter Ego** skyrocket into the atmosphere, and now with *What's Next?!*, the leading lights of techno step in to rework their favorite tracks off of the album. **Carl Craig** feeds his sampler some glam-rock chunk, **DJ Koze** dips into Afrobeat, **Adam Sky** turns pure mania into pop music – all this and 8 more!



**VARIOUS ARTISTS**  
*Round Black Ghosts CD*

*Round Black Ghosts* presents an overview of dubstep through the eyes of Berlin, continuing to map the influence of dub on electronic music, the guiding principle of the ~scape label from the outset. Compiled by label owners **Stefan Betke (Pole)** & **Barbara Preisinger** together with **Tim Tetzner**, and featuring tracks by **2562**, **Pole**, **Pinch**, **Pevelerist** and more.



**HEARTTHROB**  
*Dear Painter, Paint Me CD/2LP*

Written over a nomadic two-year period which ultimately found him settling in Berlin, **Jesse Siminski** has assembled a remarkable collection of emotionally-charged techno tracks that mirror this whirlwind experience. Mischiefous time signatures and a penchant for the dramatic and absurd add up to a hi-octane rollercoaster ride.



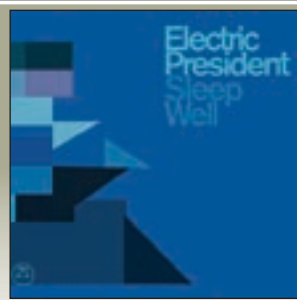
**ANJA SCHNEIDER**  
*Beyond The Valley CD*

*Beyond The Valley* is the debut full-length from Berlin-based **Anja Schneider**, founder of label-of-the-moment **Mobilee**, respected DJ and radio personality. Co-produced with **Paul Brtschitsch**, this is a rich, nuanced statement from an artist ready to open up new electronic worlds. 10 inky, supple cuts that bring the pagan in us back to life.



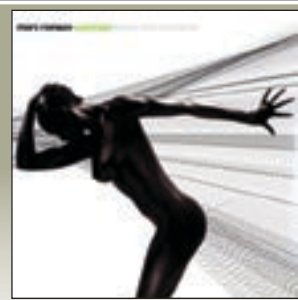
**THE MOLE**  
*As High As The Sky CD/2LP*

The debut release from Montreal's **The Mole (Colin De La Plante)** on **Matt Jonson**'s **Wagon Repair** is a stunning neo-house techno hybrid that promises to catapult Colin into the limelight as a producer to be reckoned with. Careening between bass-heavy disco workouts, shimmering soundscapes and dusted **Moodyman**-style deep house, *As High...* is about as heavy as it gets.



**ELECTRIC PRESIDENT**  
*Sleep Well CD/LP+7"*

Second album by the duo of **Ben Cooper** and **Alex Cane** recorded in the same shed in Jacksonville Beach, Florida as their previous release. For 13 months they recorded what Ben calls a "middle of the night record," his "12 pop songs about dreams and nightmares." Shadowy, inscrutable atmospheres and sparkling melodies form a ghostly music like a surging electronic tide.



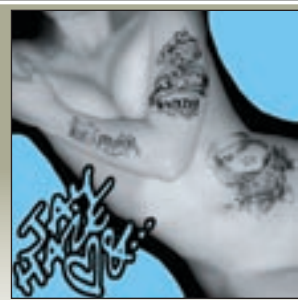
**Marc Romboy**  
*Contrast CD*

*Contrast* is the second full-length release from Systematic founder **Marc Romboy**, the follow-up to 2006's hotly-tipped *Gemini*. Produced in cooperation with **45 Rocks**, and featuring vocal contributions from **Chelonis R. Jones**, **Blake Baxter**, and **Mr. K-Alexi**, *Contrast* lives up to its title with Romboy's thrilling genre melding – this is techno that defines and defies categories.



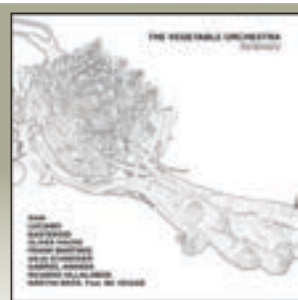
**NICOLA RATTI** *From The Desert Came Saltwater CD*

Italian-born multi-instrumentalist and architect **Nicola Ratti** presents his debut for **Anticipate**. His music is warm, subtractive rock, whereby he reduces guitar and piano figures into quiet explorations of the hidden corners of an otherwise familiar sound. Twanging guitars, spacious percussion and the occasional hushed vocal congeal into a carefully-composed reimagining of music.



**JAY HAZE**  
*Love & Beyond CD*

2007 was massive for **Jay Haze**, with 3 club hits under his **Fuckpony** moniker, singles on **Get Physical**, **BPitch** and **Cocoon**, and managing his 3 labels and a residency at **Fabric** in London. *Love & Beyond* sees Jay exploring organic funky sounds as well as hypnotic sci-fi styles, and features guests **Ricardo Villalobos**, **D:exter** and **Lil Dirty Ghetto Bastard**.



**THE VEGETABLE ORCHESTRA**  
*Remixed CD*

**Karmarouge** presents a remix compilation devoted to the organic sounds of **The Vegetable Orchestra**, who use musical instruments made out of vegetables: carrot flutes, pumpkin basses, leek violins, and celery bongos. **Ricardo Villalobos**, **Luciano**, **Oliver Hacke**, **Sian**, **Anja Schneider** and others take part and create their individual vegetable sound interpretation.



**OSBORNE**  
*Osborne CD*

*Osborne* is the debut full-length release for **Todd Osborn** and it's a celebration of all that is good in American house and techno music: past, present & future. A personal sketchbook of Todd's musical history, the album evokes a sensation of an electronic yesteryear, and it's no surprise that his records have been championed by **Gilles Peterson**, **Aphex Twin** and **UR's Mad Mike Banks**.



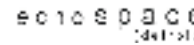
**VIBERT/SIMMONDS**  
*Rodulate CD/3LP*

*Rodulate* is the second collaborative release by **Luke Vibert (Plug, Kerrier District, Amen Andrews)** and **Jeremy Simmonds (Voafosse)**, and their first since their 1993 debut, the legendary *Weirs*. Comprised of previously-unheard, classic early material from the **Rephlex** archives selected by the artists themselves, *Rodulate* is a welcome return by this dynamic duo.



**DEEPCHORD**  
*Vantage Isle Sessions CD*

Originally released as a near-mythical vinyl pressing geared towards "those who know," this dub wonder is now finally available to the general populace on CD. 13 takes of the title track are reworked and reduced by **Stephen Hitchell** and **Rod Modell**, creating a virtual world out of analog synth hiss, deep bass and gently throbbing beats. A stone-cold classic.



These titles available at fine independent record stores or online at [www.forcedexposure.com](http://www.forcedexposure.com)

Retailers: request wholesale information from [fe@forcedexposure.com](mailto:fe@forcedexposure.com)



# C.R.A.C.

Detroit-to-L.A.'s other hip-hop collab isn't half as crass as their moniker might suggest.

C.R.A.C. (FROM LEFT): TA'RAACH AND BLU

Rappers Blu and Ta'Raach are the type of guys who make random demands—like asking me to put the names of actresses Monica Belucci and Kerry Washington somewhere in this article. In all caps. Without any preface. And as C.R.A.C.—pronounced “crass,” because, well, “That’s what the music is, that’s what we are,” says Ta’Raach—they’re less concerned with talking about music than they are about breakfast cereals. However, the Southern California-based twosome is thoughtful enough to issue their listeners this disclaimer: “There’s a lot of curse words from me personally [on our debut album, *The Piece Talks*],” warns producer/MC Ta’Raach. “And a lot more from me,” adds Blu, who was praised by various hip-hop websites as rap’s 2007 rookie of the year.

On *The Piece Talks*, Ta’Raach—who was known as Lacks, a member of J. Dilla’s Detroit camp, before migrating westward—crafts leftfield beats for himself and Blu to drop distorted soul rhymes over. And like Jaylib, that other influential L.A.-Detroit duo, C.R.A.C. (an acronym for Collect Respect Anna Check)

transcends rap mediocrity. In fact, if you ask them, they don’t even make hip-hop. “Hip-hop is forever, but let’s give birth to something else,” says Ta’Raach.

Self-identified as “lo-fi pop rock,” the duo’s music deftly defies genre classifications. At times, C.R.A.C. can be straightforward, with gritty beats, pounding percussion, and raw rhymes on tracks like “Respect” and “Major Way.” But, like a paranoid schizophrenic, the album doesn’t sit still; Ta’Raach takes different directions with each track, his layered instrumentals typically clocking in at a little over two minutes a pop. The lead single, a rousing and infectious curveball entitled “Buy Me Lunch,” features vocals from Noni Lamar over a bubbly, ’60s acoustic-pop motif. Blu and Ta’Raach don’t spit a single bar on the song, yet the few words they shout on the hook sum up what C.R.A.C. is all about, for better or worse: “Let’s play! Get paid! Don’t be fucking sensitive! And don’t be gay!”

“Most rappers are either really happy being rich and they talk about it all the time, or they’re broke

and they talk about it all the time,” Ta’Raach explains.

According to Ta’Raach, the album’s been done since 2005 but the industry’s stalemate halted its release. “The industry is broke, going through a collapse with digital marketing, digital distribution,” he explains. “It was hard for us to find a proper home. Blu did his record [*Below the Heavens*, with producer Exile]. I did a producer record [*Fevers*, which featured Blu on three tracks]. Someone hollered at us about it.”

The rest, as they say, is history. But as for the duo’s future, one can only guess. “I’m down to see what happens,” says Ta’Raach. “I just want people to listen to the record. We got more work [to do]. I was watching an interview with Russell Simmons, and he was like, ‘Yo, I just like to serve.’ I’m here to serve. I rap. I make beats. We serve the community.”

C.R.A.C.’s *The Piece Talks* is out now on Tres. [myspace.com/cracknuckles](http://myspace.com/cracknuckles)

# TIËSTO

In Search Of Sunrise 7  
Asia

In Stores 6/10/2008

- One.
1. Beyond Trees - Feel The Sun Rise
  2. Andy Dorian featuring Leah - Western
  3. Kay Uwe - I Wish (Kiss The Sky Original Mix)
  4. Menezaal - Spirit Kettle (Original Mix)
  5. Three Drives - Feel The Cheek (No To This Mix)
  6. Rachel Starr - To Forever (Manduca Remix)
  7. Jerry Rappo featuring Cee - The Storm (Noyette Remix)
  8. Kama - Get Lifted
  9. Cory Brooks - Like (Tiesto Remix)
  10. Arbas featuring Floris Ambros - Deep
  11. Diana - Please To Believe
  12. Crosside - All (Kiss & Albert Remix)
  13. Allure featuring Christine Böhmer - Power Of Love
  14. Claudia Leopard - Heartful
- Two.
1. Steve Forte Rio featuring JES - Distant (Lange Mix)
  2. Zan Brazil - Christmas
  3. Delle - Kente
  4. Sacha and Rio - Rush
  5. Tiesto - Driving To Heaven (Mia Zil Remix)
  6. Carl D. - Just A Thought
  7. Kama Lopez - Melissa
  8. JES - Whatever I May Feel (JES Remix)
  9. Ettore St. Marone - Casa Grande
  10. Eustace - Wonderful Soul
  11. Andre Vitor & Key Stone - Something For Your Mind (George Otterloo Remix)
  12. Hacha - The Cortina
  13. DJ Envy - Take For Love (MCH Remix)
  14. Monica Rizzy - Beyond The Stars



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dance life

# Field of Dreams

A van-load of intrepid foreigners sound off on Smurf parties, flying pigs, and other oddities of this year's **Coachella** Festival.

Words Brandon Ivers



Photo Brian Borcherdt

## Holy Fuck ▲

(Toronto, Canada)

### What's the best show you've seen so far?

Brian Borcherdt: Black Mountain. They had a moment where they cut to silence after this big psychedelic build-up, and then, just at the *perfect* moment, someone yelled out all enthusiastically, "I'M HIGH!"

### Did that make you high, too?

There was a cloud that morphed into Garfield's face, and then rainbows of throbbing color poured out of my hands.

### That sounds super trippy.

Graham Walsh: Yeah... but what about the airplane Roger Waters got to fly over his set during his performance of "Sheep"? With the inflatable pig floating over the crowd? That was pretty much insane.

[myspace.com/holyfuck](http://myspace.com/holyfuck)

## M.I.A. ▼

(London, England)



Photo Brandon Ivers

### You missed Fatboy Slim yesterday. How bummed are you?

I just wanna see him because he was in that band, Beats International. [Starts singing] *People always talk about reputation. I don't care about your other girls... just be good to me...* Seriously, how good is that?

### I didn't even know he did that song!

Yeah! I love that one. Norman Cook once played for 100,000 people in South America somewhere... He's been around forever. I've only had three years. That's how come I don't have all those lasers.

[miauk.com](http://miauk.com)

## Architecture in Helsinki ▼

(Melbourne, Australia)



Photo Lorène Lenoir

### Have you had any memorable celebrity sightings?

Cameron Bird: Steven Tyler from Aerosmith telling Gorky from Bonde do Role to "fuck off" for asking to get a photo with him.

### Did you get a chance to see anyone play?

Cameron Bird: Yes. Animal Collective blew my mind. The new tracks they played are the best things they've done. They went even deeper into minimal German and Detroit techno rhythms, and Panda Bear and Avey Tare sing together far more than before. They caught me so off guard that the significance of seeing Prince an hour later was all but gone.

### What's your favorite hippie sculpture? Assuming you have one...

Cameron Bird: In the middle of the grounds, there's this massive sonic sculpture called *Parabola*, covered with tons of random percussive instruments: *djembes*, steel pans, and congas, sheets of metal. Most of the time, there's, like, 20 people randomly banging shit—complete anarchy. At one point late Saturday, we all spent, like, 30 minutes jammin' it out. It was definitely the most inspiring thing that happened all weekend. Totally primal.

[architectureinhelsinki.com](http://architectureinhelsinki.com)

## Midnight Juggernauts ▼

(Melbourne, Australia)



Photo Brandon Ivers

### Any bad fuck-ups during your set?

Daniel Stricker: Nah, nothing too bad. We always have fuck-ups when we play live, but we try to pretend like it was on purpose. Andrew Juggernaut: If it seems like we've gone off on this epic 10-minute jam, something probably broke.

### What artists are you psyched to see?

Daniel Stricker: [The Breeders' "Cannonball" plays in the background] I'm such a massive Pixies fan. I was never into The Breeders as much... but hearing them play right now is fantastic.

### Got any afterparty plans tonight?

Vincenzi Vendetta: What about the Smurf party? Everyone wants to go to that.

### What?!

Daniel Stricker: Yeah! There's a Smurf party with a bunch of Smurfettes. I don't know if they're real, though.

[myspace.com/midnightjuggernauts](http://myspace.com/midnightjuggernauts)

## Cut Copy ▼

(Melbourne, Australia)



Photo Dave Vann

### What do you think of Coachella's desert location?

Tim Hoey: It's so surreal out here. Driving in from Los Angeles took me straight back to that David Lynch film *Wild at Heart*—the part when Nicolas Cage is driving through the desert, and "Wicked Game" is playing in the background.

### Speaking of surreal, what's your impression of how the women at Coachella dress?

Mitchell Scott: Well. They seem to dress accordingly. Dan Whitford: What exactly do you mean by that? Mitchell Scott: Umm... hmm. They don't really wear much of *anything*, do they?

[myspace.com/cutcopy](http://myspace.com/cutcopy)

# Let's Twist Again

Munich's **The Notwist** kicks off a tour six years after their last album.



**Starting as a punk/metal act** in the late '80s, Munich-based **The Notwist** has shapeshifted their way to this summer's *The Devil, You + Me*. A blissfully heady extension of 2002's *Neon Golden*, *Devil* again sublimely melds indie-rock sensibilities with an experimental spirit. What results from Markus Acher's mellow voice, Michael Acher's bass, and Martin Gretschmann's programming is a kind of easy

listening that nevertheless gets fans endlessly riled. Taking the stage at Prague's Palác Akropolis for the opening show of the *Devil* tour in April, The Notwist appeared the anxious crowd with an exuberant performance. The cave-like theater's dim lighting matched a harder-edged musical vibe, as songs bordering on industrial followed those like "Where in This World," which

rumbled with bass and horn arrangements. "Day 7" and "Pilot" got the most raucous reactions, from lip-synching to drunken body-slaming. Their encore, "Good Lies," kept fans screaming, but all good things must come to an end—and they did, as Gretschmann hoisted up his laptop, which read (in typically humble style) "We're sorry, but we have to go." *Rachel Shimp*



**XLR8R: How've you kept busy in the six years since *Neon Golden*?**

Martin Gretschmann: I did some [music for the solo project] Console, and film music for our friend Joerg Adolph, which partly ended up on the Console album *Mono*. I started a club [Rote Sonne] in Munich with some friends. And I have been quite busy with DJing (as Acid Pauli). The others did records and toured with Lali Puna, Ms. John Soda, and Tied & Tickled Trio. And the three of us formed this 13&God band with Themselves from S.F.

**Was there a point that you officially broke up?**

No. We never broke up or even thought about doing

so. We just did what we always do in between the Notwist records. We take care of all the others' bands.

**What prompted your decision to begin working together again?**

It was clear that we wanted to make a new album after we made the other records with the other bands.

**Was there a prevailing mood when making *Devil*?**

Well, quite a lot of very positive and very negative things happened in the past years. Friends got injured in accidents or suffered from diseases. All of this made its way into the music and the lyrics. But this happened unconsciously. We didn't really have a clue

at the beginning of how it would sound in the end.

**What is the biggest difference audiences might notice about your tour this time around?**

We play some new songs. We have a new drummer, Andreas Haberl. And for the first time in our history, we have someone on tour who will take care of the lights.

The Notwist's *The Devil, You + Me* is out now on Domino. [notwist.com](http://notwist.com)

- 80'S
- Afrobeat
- Baltimore Club
- Baile Funk
- Breakbeat
- Disco
- Downtempo
- Drum & Bass
- Dub Step
- Effects & Acappela
- Electro House
- Electronica
- Freestyle
- Funk & Soul
- Funkybreaks
- Go Go
- Hip Hop
- HipHop Classic
- House
- Indie Electro
- Jazz
- Mashups
- New Funk
- Nu Disco / Cosmic
- Nujazz / Broken
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**FACTOZOID** Osborne

A few things you always wanted to know about Michigan's favorite acid-ragga enthusiast.

Whether producing ragga jungle under the moniker Soundmurderer, booty bass as Starski and Clutch, or florid four-on-the-floor as Osborne, Ypsilanti, Michigan's Todd Osborn (no "e") knows how to mix it up. His recent self-titled album relaunches his Osborne alias with supple, deep-Afro-acid-house affirmations culled from analog synths and self-constructed composition tools. But music is hardly his sole interest. Here are a few other boyscout badges that adorn this beat master's vest. *Tony Ware*

**OSBORNE IS A LICENSED PILOT AND AIRLINE MECHANIC.**

"I think I must have first tried flying in '92 in Japan because I distinctly remember Smart E's 'Sesame's Treet' being played at clubs all the time," he says. "My grandpa started an aviation ground-support company long ago so he'd give me books on airplanes when I was little. I'm sure he had a lot to do with my interest in flying but I never could have realized it without my buddy Jason. Flying never gets old. It's always a thrill, it's always fun. I learn something new every time I'm around aircraft. Flying planes is like the sixth aspect of hip-hop no one knows about."

**OSBORNE LOVES CRITERION COLLECTION DVD SETS.**

"If I had to currently pick a favorite I'd say Louis Malles' six-hour *Phantom India* (actually on the Criterion sublabel, Eclipse). I could watch that 24 hours a day. I love all of his documentaries, but that's one I never tire of. Malle made the film with no specific subject in mind. They just traveled throughout India showing everyday life. The only Criterion movie I could think to do a score for would be *Häxan*. It's from 1922, and is about the history of witchcraft. I think it would be nice to have the score all as digital noise and unsettling vocal bits. You know, never mind me doing it. Just watch that movie while playing the Whitehouse *Cruise* LP. It's better than I could ever do."

**OSBORNE IS AN AVID COLLECTOR OF NPR SHOWS.**

"*This American Life* is definitely my [all-time] favorite. I've always been interested in sociology and psychology and hearing first-hand accounts of day-to-day stories, no matter how mundane. *This American Life* seems like one huge 300-hour show (well, currently 354 to be exact...). *The Moth* is my current favorite show. It's nothing but first-hand accounts of people telling stories. In fact, *This American Life* sometimes uses recordings from *The Moth* in their stories."

**OSBORNE IS BUILDING A HOVERCRAFT.**

"I like to experiment. I'm not really into making a track (or a hovercraft, for that matter) for the sake of the music or because people will hear it or to make money. I just enjoy the process of making it, how it evolves from nothing. The hovercraft is going slowly but surely. I've finally found two identical snowmobile engines to use for each fan. [As far as the plans], you can get a long way by acting like to know what you're doing. Believe me, companies will send you schematics you thought no longer existed if you can word an email like an electrical engineer."

Osborne's self-titled album is out now on Spectral Sound. [myspace.com/soundmurderer](http://myspace.com/soundmurderer)

To see more of Osborne's fascinations, visit [XLR8R.com/118extras](http://XLR8R.com/118extras).

Available Now!



"Mr. Mister" & "Mr. Mister" Remix video in rotation now!



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# The Italians Are Coming

*XL88R* rounds up the best dancefloor beats **The Boot** has to offer.



France has distorted house, Brazil has *baile* funk, England has dubstep, and Baltimore has club. Italy has all of these things smashed together, chopped, rewound,

sped up, and run through a washing machine—with some Pecorino Romano sprinkled on top. A growing number of Italian DJs and producers are putting their home turf on

the international dance map, so we checked in with six of the country's top party rockers to see what's cooking. *Ali Gitlow*

## ● The Bloody Beetroots



Echoing forth from their studio in Venice's Bassano del Grappa, home of the namesake 160-proof alcohol, comes these ex-punks' self-professed "schizoid sound," which seems to be made by running beats

through scanners and fax-machines. Their gritty, nasty, electro-tinged jams have appeared on the holy hipster trinity—Dim Mak, Iheartcomix, Kitsuné—but the real fun is seeing members Bob Rifo and Tommy Tee

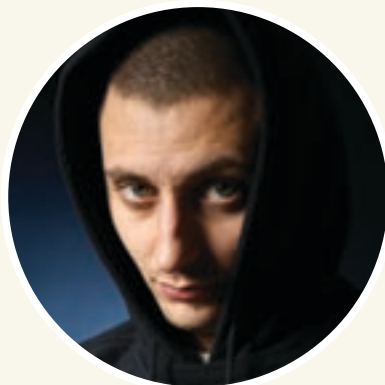
DJ wearing Marvel comics-inspired masks.

**Favorite Italian dish:** Beetroots, preferably bloody.

[myspace.com/thebloodybeetroots](http://myspace.com/thebloodybeetroots)



## ● Mowgli



Bad boy Mowgli grew up in Belluno, a small, mountainous town in the Northeast, but has since decamped to London (by way of Bologna), where he's proving himself to be a groovy house-smith with remixes of Benny Benassi and Mr. Elastic. He's also got a minimal-techno side-project (as MINIMOW), and is developing his own label, Deadfish Audio.

**Favorite Italian dish:** Pizza.

[myspace.com/mowglimusik](http://myspace.com/mowglimusik)

## ● Blatta & Inesha



Blatta, a trained jazz musician, and Inesha, a two-time Italian DMC champion, started off making nu-skoool breaks tracks for Mantra Vibes and U.K. label Fat, but these days they're crafting bass-driven house that's bouncy enough to wreck any pool party. The duo hails from Catania, in the eastern part of Sicily.

**Favorite Italian dish:** We don't eat. We are watching our figures in case our music career goes bad. Then we can continue our modeling career.

[panzablitz.com](http://panzablitz.com)

## ● Crookers



Milan's Crookers (made up of DJ/producers Bot and Phra) have created an army of synth-infested electro-club bangers whose breakdowns evoke warm fuzzies from raver days of yore. Having remixed the likes of Bonde do Role, Kid Cudi, and Chemical Brothers and recorded for Southern Fried, Man

Recordings, and Mad Decent, their unique and jumpy sound is proving Italians do it better.

**Favorite Italian dish:** Discover it on *Cookin'* with Crookers, soon on YouTube!

[myspace.com/crookers](http://myspace.com/crookers)

## ● Congorock



Taking cues from Euro hard house, ghettech, and videogames, the effervescent Congorock has just unleashed his first EP for Fools Gold, featuring the dirty 8-bit banger "Runark." Though he now lives in Milan, Congo grew up in Lecce in the bottom of the boot-heel, not far from mother Africa. "Living in Lecce is like being in Jamaica because of the big reggae-dancehall scene," he says—inspiration for his big, deep basslines perhaps?

**Favorite Italian dish:** *Purpette* (meatballs).

[congorock.net](http://congorock.net)





# The Advisory Circle

Suburban anxiety and stock psychedelia abound in Jon Brooks' worlds of sound.

On The Advisory Circle's debut EP, *Mind How You Go*, a disembodied voice echoes forth the slogan, "The Advisory Circle—helping you make the right decisions!" Innocent, promising words perhaps, especially as a light bed of Moog synthesizer (straight out of '70s British TV adverts) hums below. But it's the delivery—a cold, state-certified Big Sister voice—that belies something much more sinister. And it's that lurking Orwellian tone that's at the core of The Advisory Circle, the brainchild of Derbyshire, U.K.-based sound experimenter Jon Brooks.

Brooks says The Advisory Circle's music is about hidden coercion, both political and supernatural. "It's about the State which says, 'We'll look after you, everything is going to be all right,' with a caring smile, whilst it's preparing to institutionalize you," he offers. "It's paranoia and psychosis. It's witchcraft and the occult. Folklore and tradition. Ritual."

A member of the U.K.'s Ghost Box collective/record label, which includes artists The Focus Group, Belbury Poly, and Mount Vernon Arts Lab, Brooks and his labelmates share an affinity for haunted places, psychedelia, analog synth sounds, and "library music" from British children's programs and documentaries of the '60s and '70s. It might sound like an aesthetic already mastered by Boards of Canada, but Ghost Box ventures into darker and more abstract realms. "For me, the main appeal of '70s library music is that although it's functional music, it can also be very experimental," Brooks says.

On his records, like the recent *Other Channels*, Brooks melds numerous instruments, including moldy, "steam-powered" synthesizers, with TV samples and field recordings. The result plays out like a soundtrack to the life of a British suburban housewife in the '70s. She's settled in a comfortable home, "and she's absolutely bored to hell with all of it," Brooks explains. A perfect example is the soap opera-themed "Mogadon Coffee Morning," which Brooks describes as the sound of "a housewife living in her bubble, pie-eyed on barbiturates, trying to leave the straight life behind."

On top of this ennui is the Cold War paranoia that Soviet nuclear bombs could rain at any moment. That feeling dwells in the track "Civil Defense is Common Sense," where a grandfatherly voice announces the title before Brooks plays a hymnal, analog-synth melody that resembles a gloomy, patriotic call-to-arms.

"Everything's fine, but there is something not quite right about it," is one way that Brooks describes the atmosphere of The Advisory Circle. You might call it gallows humor, if you've given "Frozen Ponds PIF"—a PSA to keep kids off frozen ponds (complete with sounds simulating grave misfortunes)—a spin. Other tracks aren't nearly as self-explanatory, but Brooks maintains the mystery. "If I told you how I'd envisioned all [the tracks], it would kill [it], so I won't," he says. "I want every listener to get their cogs whirring and form their own interpretations."

The Advisory Circle's *Other Channels* is out now on Ghost Box. [myspace.com/theadvisorycircle](http://myspace.com/theadvisorycircle)



# Spin Cycle



Jay Reatard and his band



Photo: Jeff Allen

**Talking Heads'** David Byrne and producer extraordinaire Brian Eno have announced that they are back in the studio together, and intend to perform again soon. Eno produced three Talking Heads records in the '70s and '80s, culminating in his and Byrne's 1981

classic *My Life in the Bush of Ghosts*.

In late April, Memphis rocker Jay Reatard struck a concertgoer in the face after he climbed on stage at Toronto's Silver Dollar. The show was fraught with crowd-control issues, and much of the band's

equipment was destroyed in the melee. "I'm getting really sick of shit like this happening," Jay wrote on his blog. "We'll come back to Toronto soon and do a free show to make it up to the real fans in Toronto." Read the full text at [jayreatard.blogspot.com](http://jayreatard.blogspot.com).

Aaron Rose's *Beautiful Losers*, a documentary film about the DIY art scene, featuring Harmony Korine, Ed Templeton, Chris Johanson, and other artists (and following the roving exhibition of the same name), hit festivals this spring. Look for screenings in your town

at [beautifullosers.com](http://beautifullosers.com).

Adult Swim has partnered with Ghostly International to release a free-download album. *Ghostly Swim* features new tracks by Dabrye, Michna, Matthew Dear, JDSY, and more. Grab it at [ghostly.com](http://ghostly.com) and [adultswim.com](http://adultswim.com).

## So Psyched!!!

New records are expected in the coming months from **Asobi Seksu** (Polyvinyl), **The Chap** (Ghostly International), **N.E.R.D.** (Virgin), **Otto Von Schirach** (Cock Rock Disco) **DJ /rupture** (The Agriculture), **Scratch Massive** (Chateaurouge), **Force of Nature** (Mule Musiq), and **Alter Ego** (Klang Elektronik). Also look out for the third installment in Ed Banger's signature *Ed Rec* label comps and a *DJ-Kicks* mix from **Burial** (K7).

## I'm Bored!



In April, *XLR8R* and **Onitsuka Tiger** sponsored **Boredoms'** U.S. tour, which made stops in San Diego, L.A., and San Francisco before heading east for New York. The Japanese noise demigods, who signed to Chicago's Thrill Jockey earlier this year, performed all shows "in the round," affording the audience better views of their immensely complex music-making apparatuses, and further pushing the boundaries of the way rock shows are experienced. "I think of the band itself as a type of playback device, something like a regenerating circuit," lead Boredom Yamantaka Eye explained to *The Washington Post*. Look for *Super Roots 9*, the group's latest, out now on Thrill Jockey.

**PictureBox Inc.**, the publisher responsible for some of *XLR8R's* favorite art books (from the likes of **Brian Paper Rad** and **Brian Chippendale**), has just opened a brick-and-mortar store in Brooklyn.

To get the details, hit up [pictureboxinc.com](http://pictureboxinc.com). **Richie Hawtin's** Minus label, which turns 10 this year, will hold its celebratory Sunday Adventure Club Open Air in Berlin on June

15. The performance, to take place near the Postbahnhof, will include sets by Hawtin, **Matthew Dear's Big Hands**, **Steve Bug**, **Zip Luciano**, **Marco Carola**, **Loco Dice**, **Magda**, **Marc Houle**, **Konrad Black**,

and... wait, no **Sven Väth**? Guess he'll just have to be substituted by the Svenpanel, which you can have some fun with at [theshrine.de](http://theshrine.de).



## ALL-FEMALE

### Mixtape by NYC street stylist Claw Money

#### 1. Roxy Cottontail "Kate Moss"

Look out for this dynamo. She is coming with it for the ladies! Me loves all things Roxy.

#### 2. Roxanne Shanté "Go On, Girl!"

The all-time greatest female MC with the James Brown loop, pre-Rob Base's "It Takes Two."

#### 3. B-52's "52 Girls"

One of the all-time best pre-new wave songs from the best beehives in the business.

#### 4. Romeo Void "Never Say Never"

This makes my inner fat girl cry.

#### 5. M.I.A. "Paper Planes"

All I want to do is bang bang bang and take your money... That's my line!

#### 6. Siouxsie and The Banshees "Hong Kong Garden"

Lush and fun, this song is both poetic and punk.

#### 7. Santogold "L.E.S. Artistes"

Another up-and-coming female superstar in the making.

#### 8. Missing Persons "Destination Unknown"

This song is the soundtrack for my life—who knows where it will end up?

#### 9. Berlin "The Metro"

Sexy and seductive, this one makes me want to pack up my spray cans and get a plane ticket to Paris.

#### 10. Joan Jett and The Blackhearts "Do You Wanna Touch Me?"

The better version of the Gary Glitter classic and, well, don't ya?

Claw Money's latest collaboration is a set of mobile-device cases and bags with Boost Mobile. [clawmoney.com](http://clawmoney.com), [boostedmobile.com](http://boostedmobile.com)

## On the XLR8R Headphones

- The Mole High as the Sky (Wagon Repair)*
- VIA Round Black Ghosts (~scape)*
- Odd Nosdam Pretty Swell Explode (Anticon)*
- Surkin Next of Kin EP (Institubes)*
- Syclops I've Got My Eye on You (DFA)*
- Osborne Osborne (Spectral Sound)*
- Eliot Lipp The Outside (Mush)*
- Hercules and Love Affair S/T (DFA-Mute)*
- X-Mal Deutschland Fetisch (4AD)*
- The B-52's The B-52's (Reprise/WEA)*

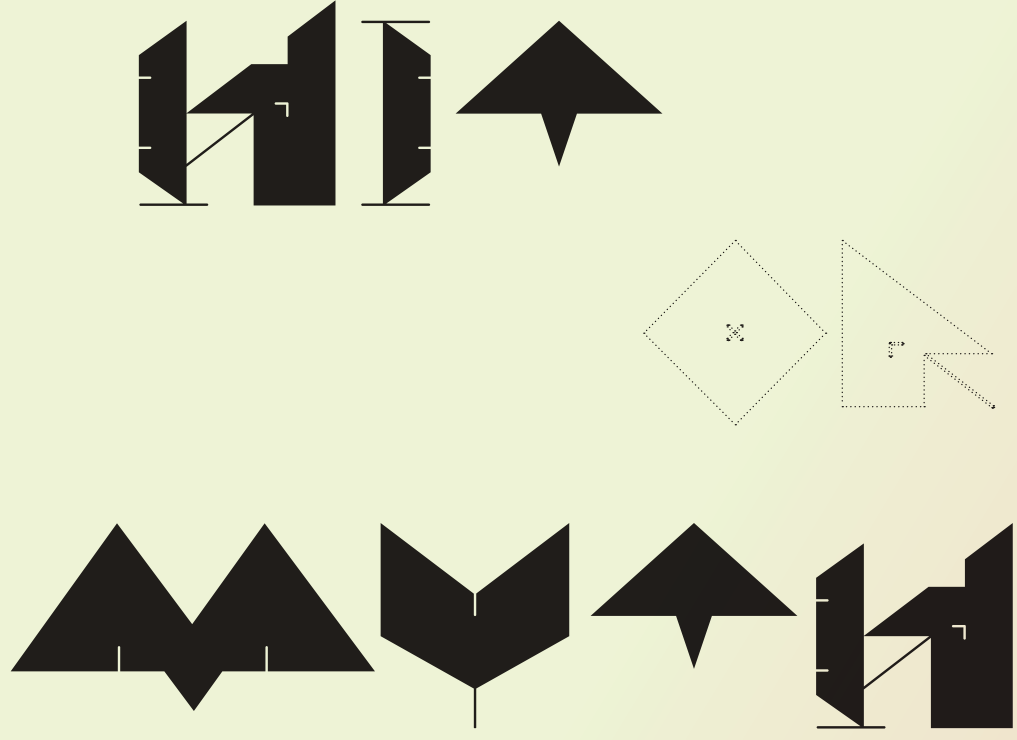


## ;D Phone Pix! From Flying Lotus

A lovely weed menu from one of Amsterdam's "coffee shops."

Flying Lotus' *Los Angeles* is out this month on Warp. [myspace.com/flyinglotus](http://myspace.com/flyinglotus)

HERCULES AND LOVE AFFAIR CHANNEL DISCO'S AGONY AND ECSTASY  
FOR A NEW GENERATION OF DANCING OUTSIDERS



WORDS: CAMERON MACDONALD. PHOTOS: JOSH MCNEY

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Four years ago, New York DJ Andy Butler began writing songs that harkened back to the sweat, carnal bliss, and escapism of the 1970s dance underground, then humbly “dragging” his friends into the studio to sing them. Antony Hegarty, who had yet to rocket to indie stardom with Antony and the Johnsons, dropped by to sing over a horn-driven stargazing number that would eventually be called “Blind.” Wrapping each verse in his androgynous, velvet-cushioned voice, he enticed listeners to let their minds and bodies drift into the track’s eerie, Gino Soccio-style disco groove. This was disco without the kitsch, recalling the cultural and sexual outer limits the genre explored before John Travolta and “Disco Duck” crashed the party.

After hearing the track, DFA ringleader James Murphy was so taken by the project, called Hercules and Love Affair, that he greenlighted an entire album. Quickly, Butler went from being a bedroom producer carrying on Arthur Russell’s legacy, to leading an entire band, which now consists of three vocalists—Hegarty (who does not tour with them), Nomi Ruiz, and Kim Ann Foxman—and a slew of players, including a two-man horn section, a live drummer and bassist, and Shayne, a dancer straight who could be straight out of Jennie Livingston’s 1990 voguing film, *Paris Is Burning*.

Though the group quietly debuted in September 2007, when DFA released their acid-house flashback single “Classique #2,” the explosion following the January release of “Blind” was intense. The single amassed a feverish buzz in Europe after it soundtracked the Chanel and Versace runway shows during Autumn/Winter ’08 Fashion Week. A video for the song—featuring British actress Jamie Winstone being lured into a bacchanalian Roman orgy—sent U.K. media into a frenzy. All this, coupled with underground club buzz and a remix by house legend Frankie Knuckles, led to tickets for this month’s overseas debut, at London’s SoHo Review Theater, being sold out months in advance. “I didn’t expect anything less,” Ruiz says nonchalantly about the reaction.

#### PROBLÈMES D’AMOUR

Aside from the fact that it “just has a nice disco ring to it,” Hercules and Love Affair’s unique name is inspired by Butler’s childhood love of Greek myths. “They were my fairy tales,” he recalls. “I almost, to some degree, believed in all of it.” Later he would come across stories of Hercules’ gay love affairs, notably a tragedy where he lost his lover, Hylas. “He’s wandering this island looking for him in total despair,” he says. “I thought that this was a beautiful image of the strongest man on Earth feeling his emotions to the fullest and feeling the most vulnerable at that moment.”

Strong yet vulnerable, danceable, decadent: all apt adjectives for the group’s debut, which is spookily faithful to the sounds of ’70s underground disco and ’80s house. The nuances of classic Chicago

trax come alive on “You Belong,” where Ruiz’s R&B-seasoned voice gently floats out of the club speakers and weaves between fragments of melancholic synth riffs and backwards-looped machine beats. Foxman leads the locked, bass-oiled groove of “Athene,” which recalls trance-inducing space-outs created by Arthur Russell’s Loose Joints band somewhere in the back of storied NYC venue The Kitchen. And then there are the Loft-era strains of “Hercules Theme,” where Ruiz announces the ancient Greek hero’s entrance into the discotheque amid hustling orchestral string flourishes and live brass stabs.

Herculean arcs of melancholy haunt the record as well; lovesickness fills songs like the confrontational album opener “Time Will” and the fractured electro ballad “Easy.” “My music is about growing up and coming into an adult being,” explains Butler, who writes many of his lyrics about events of his youth. “My records are very personal. At moments [my music] does address being a gay man and growing up as a gay man.” But Butler also attributes the album’s power to the unique timbre of Hegarty’s vocals. “Antony is a presence with a specific voice that a lot of people have latched onto,” he explains. “He speaks for a lot of people who struggle and he offers a voice for people in between different orientations.”

#### NO WAY BACK

Album co-producer Tim Goldsworthy—the DFA mastermind who has worked with The Rapture, Cut Copy, and LCD Soundsystem—says Hercules’ music recalls early disco’s interest in art, dance, and pushing boundaries. “There was a sense of freedom and experimentation, while keeping in mind that it has to make people dance and feel good at the end of the day,” he states. Goldsworthy was a particularly perfect engineering partner, thanks to his knowledge of how dance music from different eras was performed and produced. The ’80s sounds heard in “You Belong,” for example, were made using era-specific samplers, Roland drum machines, and the classic Yamaha DX-100 synth. “The whole thing could’ve been made in 1986,” Goldsworthy says.



KIM ANN FOXMAN AND ANDY BUTLER

" I JUST WISH



...WITH NO GUARD UP."

-KIM ANN FOXMAN



THAT PEOPLE DANCED LIKE THEY DID THEN...

"IT'S ABOUT EXPRESSING YOURSELF TO THE FULLEST AND NOT HAVING ANY SHAME."  
—ANDY BUTLER



"[Back then], they made things [with the thought] in mind that they were instruments," says Goldsworthy, extolling the virtues of vintage gear. "Now stuff is made in the same way that they make a video recorder. It's just a box with buttons rather than something you play with, it's not as much fun. With the stuff from back in the day, even when it sounded shit, it sounded a lot better than the new stuff today."

#### A FAMILY AFFAIR

Goldsworthy says that Hercules' real secret weapon is the "years of knowledge" its members have amassed. Butler began DJing at the age 15 at a gay bar in his native Denver. He then moved to Brooklyn, and went on to host the NYC party series Cazzo Pazzo, where house and techno DJs like Derrick Carter and John Selway were required to play their best dusty disco records. The party was a reflection of the way Butler was drawn to disco in the first place: through house DJs who threw disco into their sets at the night's end. He recalls a pivotal party in a living room where San Francisco house pioneer DJ Garth "played four hours of music, nothing newer than 1983."

Ruiz, whose dusky vocals remind of Trax Records diva Xaviera Gold (of "You Used to Hold Me" fame), is a singer/songwriter who has collaborated with Blondie's Debbie Harry and CocoRosie. Ruiz, who grew up on hip-hop in Brooklyn, was a club kid throughout the '90s, dancing the night away to Latin and tribal house. "I was addicted to being lost in the sirens, live congas, flashing lights, smoke machines, and sweat," she recalls. "People really took their time to get dressed, create a scene, [and] represent where they came from. It's a vision of nightlife that I hope to see in New York again. It's definitely the spirit I'm going to be bringing when I'm onstage."

Kim Ann Foxman, whose high, airy tones are

a unique counter to Nomi's deeper notes, is a Hawaiian-born DJ and jewelry-maker. She met Butler when he played her lesbian dance party, Mad Clams, held at infamous East Village bar The Hole; the two made "silly" background videos and original songs for the parties, many of which were themed. Foxman, a fan of strange disco and underground house, pines for the let-it-all-hang-out spirit of the disco era, though she is too young to have experienced it. "I just wish that people danced like they did then, with no guard up because [they] were really feeling the music," she says.

Tour drummer Guy Licata, who has played with Bill Laswell and Santogold, says that what makes the group remarkable is its diversity. "All of us are invested and all breathe life into this thing, whether it's in the studio or taking it out live. We can all relate in one way or another to Andy's vision and his art, and are inspired by it regardless of our own life experiences."

"It's not like it's just a couple of gay people with a studio session band," notes Butler of the pansexual disco tribe he's united. "[The other musicians are] an intricate and creative part. A group of people getting together and communicating in spirit in song and celebration—that's what happens when people make disco."

"I sincerely love disco music," he continues. "I revere it. It's a style of music that really embraced and championed musicians. And it's about expressing yourself to the fullest and not having any shame. It's about getting people together to dance."

Hercules and Love Affair's self-titled album is out June 24 on Mute/DFA.

[herculesandloveaffair.com](http://herculesandloveaffair.com)

## GROOVE IS IN THE HEART

A few Herculeans share their disco and house influences.



### NOMI RUIZ, VOCALIST

"I tried to evoke Deborah Harry when singing 'Hercules Theme.' She was probably the first voice I heard over disco. She's my first everything."



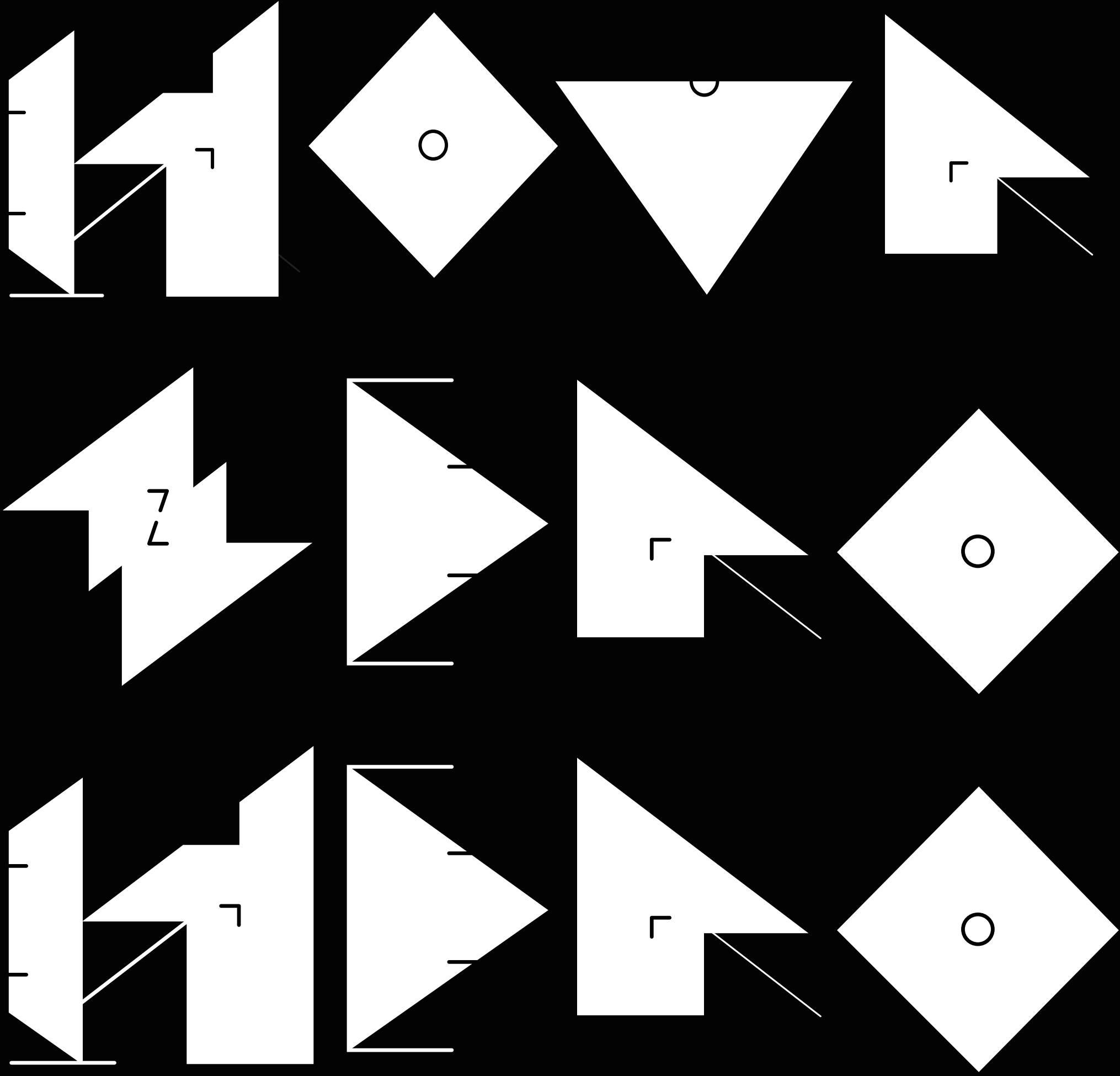
### KIM ANN FOXMAN, VOCALIST

"My inspiration comes a lot from house music. Paris Grey [of Inner City] is legendary, and Lady Miss Kier [of Deee-Lite] gave me some advice and encouragement and that meant a lot to me because I was a huge fan of hers."



### GUY LICATA, TOUR DRUMMER

"Truth be told, I got into dance music via jungle/drum & bass and breakbeat culture. I eventually got into disco through drummers. I'm an enormous Steve Gadd fan. He played on an incredible amount of records, including Van McCoy's 'The Hustle.' He's said to have 'invented' the disco beat, and I really don't doubt it."



ADAM "DOSEONE" DRUCKER AND HIS AVANT-HOP SEXTET **SUBTLE**  
BATTLE GODS, MONSTERS, AND LUCK TO PRODUCE THEIR MOST INTRICATE  
AND ACCESSIBLE ALBUM YET.



Doseone gives me a hug, asks about my drive, and, satisfied, returns to his makeshift studio.

I'm pulled into the room by his wake. The computer is buzzing and around it are tiers of keyboards, a turntable, microphones, and effects pedals; twining wires and cords snake outward to ancient Dictaphones and around dozens of strange, small keepsakes. It smells like ash, but feels electric. Adam "Doseone" Drucker is buzzing too, like he's been waiting, but the truth is, he's been doing nothing but working for some time. He's sporting a few days' of stubble and a sloppy mohawk, and old baggy jeans that look like two suspended tubes slashed across the middle. We're in his small studio apartment in a nicer slice of Oakland, adjacent to Lake Merritt. He sits back down in his command center, and begins to explain the inexplicable.

"The Long Vein of the Law has this wall that is this Amassed Black of All Fact, which he found through his final pursuit for The Un-godz." He's speaking a language from another world. "He had to go and find one of the Last Primal Hundred Somethings hatched from the Great Nothing Much, which was the Bush of No Ghosts. He actually comes back with the Highly Unlikely Rock, saying he didn't find it, and the next time he goes out, he never comes back."

I haven't asked a question yet. An hour and a half goes by like this, but it's fine. This is exactly why I've come. After a long line of notable moments and album-length feats, Subtle, the band that Drucker fronts, has hit a rare internal artistic synthesis. They've made a new album, their third, *ExitingARM*, and it's gorgeous. On some nasty, guttural level, it's music like you've never heard: a cold/hot combination of prog, rap, pop, rock, and electronic sound that swirls together as shapely solid and many-layered as a tornado. But at the surface, *ExitingARM* is easy—this is Subtle's pop record, and it weaves odd melodic beauty through speaker-crushing electro stomp ("Gonebones"), complex musicality ("Day Dangerous"), heavily styled fast-rapping ("The No"), and multi-movement suites ("The Crow").

Also quite worth mentioning, and what Adam was going on about earlier, is the album's literary counterpart, *The Ought Almanac of Amassed Fact, Vol. 1*. It's a 20,000-word tome outlining in unfurling poetry the key pieces and players of the complex myth that Drucker's been spinning over six years of Subtle songs. *The Ought* also exists as a website that animates his paintings and features poems read over salvaged scraps from the record.



SUBTLE (LEFT TO RIGHT), ALEXANDER KORT, DAX PIERSON, MARTY DOWERS, JEFFREY "JEL" LOGAN, DOSEONE, JORDAN DALRYMPLE



"THAT'S WHY I'M WRITING THIS NARNIA FOR REAL PEOPLE..."

IT'S LIKE I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DEAD," -DOSEONE

#### LUCKED, UNLUCKED

Now Adam's cooking fish in his tiny kitchen. With a physical wall between him and the story he's created, his thoughts finally settle to earth. "I believe Subtle is evidence of something opposing the making and vaulting of all this music that's been done before, all these 'me/I/me' songs. Everyone just going with the flow, filling up their iPod playlists instead of building collections like they used to." His words are a spray of jagged lines, following several tangents at once and outpacing the casual listener; his pure energy not at all mitigated by the spliffs he's been chain-smoking, the half-dozen Tsingtaos we've clinked, or the frying pan he's tending to. "It's just not hopeful, and I feel I violently want to change that."

Drucker, who just turned 30, has always been this hungry. He climbed to the upper echelons of battle rap in 1997, famously dueling a young Eminem at Scribble Jam. He laid the groundwork for post-D.A.I.S.Y. Age art-hop via two seminal late-'90s groups (Deep Puddle Dynamics with Sole, Slug of Atmosphere, and Alias; and cLOUDDEAD with Odd Nosdam and Why?). He co-founded Anticon, the iconoclastic collective and label; and he's averaged two full-length albums per year, solo or in collaboration, for a decade now. But not 'til the formation of Subtle have things unwound like this. It seems he's found the perfect set with which to blow wide the avenues of art and inspiration. It's hard not to picture him, mohawk flaming, gripping in his teeth the reins of some great

chariot pulled by five talented and heart-strong men.

But that wouldn't be fair. Subtle's energy comes from the strength of its individual art warriors. Jeffrey "Jel" Logan, another Anticon founder, is a renowned master of the SP 1200 beat machine. Jordan Dalrymple is the consummate band hand with a producer's ear, playing drums, guitar, synth, and singing. Dax Pierson, who first united the Subtle six, provides beatboxing, vocals, Autoharp, and programming. Alex Kort plays electric cello and double bass, often shredding the former like a Fender Strat. And Marty Dowers plays all manner of woodwinds. They are six men of different ages, levels of training, and influences. Each plays producer at some point, and their creative process hearkens back to the "instant compositions" of Krautrock giants Can, beginning with a series of improv sessions recorded several ways—tracked to computer and siphoned through Adam's swap-meet Dictaphones—and ending with hours of assemblage.

Dinner's served, so we take up residence in the living room, which is dominated by Adam's bed and a spare-but-strong music collection: This Heat, Kate Bush, Boards of Canada, Freestyle Fellowship... If Subtle could be broken down to a recipe, this would be an apt base. Talk turns to the devil's details. On February 24, 2005, touring their first album, *A New White*, through an Iowan winter, Subtle's van hit a slick of black ice. Their world went into a barrel roll and Dax was left paralyzed from the chest down, arms included. Under a loving hail of benefit shows on

either side of the Atlantic, Subtle swallowed self-pity and made an even stronger record, *For Hero: For Fool*, with Dax contributing every way that he could (for *ExitingARM* he uses a program that allows him to do all but perform live). Then, touring that record in Barcelona, \$15,000 of equipment was stolen from their van.

"Our suppression has been ever-faceted," says Adam, "so I don't see how the inverse of that will be anything but complex and complete. I lost the raw almanac in Spain—my laptop was stolen and all I had left was an old draft I'd printed. I was drinking every day, and then I snapped and there was no more blank paper—I'd written the rest of the story. Our luck is the way it is and I'll take it, because I'll be damned if we didn't triple-down to do *ExitingARM*. That's why I'm writing this *Narnia* for real people... It's like I'm supposed to be dead. We could have all died."

#### CARVING FACT FROM FICTION

Like their sound, the ongoing Subtle myth is equal parts contained and untamable. The protagonist Hour Hero Yes is a poet plagued by what seems to be vivid day-terrors, though he's really a pawn in the machinations of two deities bent on sapping humankind of its want for choice. (The vinyl version of *For Hero: For Fool* folds out into the very boardgame by which the Un-godz determine Yes' fate.) The *Ought Almanac* is the hero's hidden journal; *ExitingARM* is his coded broadcast

of the horrors he's seen.

All told, this is an ongoing epic about art's industrialization, the dumbing down of culture, addiction, bills, and day jobs, celebrity obsession, consumption, and caste. It even details the birth of human creativity, and portends its slow murder by a dooming apathy called The Great Nothing Much. Cutting through the fantastical imagery—demigods that look like demon doctors and reverends, swarms of flying forks, machines that read the dreams of blind children—is an obsessive concern with middle-classdom. On *ExitingARM*'s single "Unlikely Rock Shock," Drucker repeatedly croons, "*What's working man's hope?/They call it cope.*"

Critics have skewered the Doseone oeuvre as so much artifice, but visit him where his gut lives, and the truth of the man is evident. Call it inspiration or some brand of insanity—this is all very real for him. Adam is of pure artist stock, which is to say he couldn't work "normal" for food if he tried. He talks about his characters like they're in the room. His words are manically exuberant. He can't *not* go above and far beyond. These signs don't lie. And neither does the modest apartment of mismatched furniture, nor the bare plastic bones of his emaciated refrigerator (and still he bought us food and beer). He doesn't like to talk about this, but it's late now—half past three in the morning—and there's little ground left uncovered.

"Everyone's saying that records are free now." His voice croaks



"FOR US,  
IT'S AS BIG AS OUR ART CAN GET." -DOSEONE



hoarse but it's barely slowed. "I guess to me records have always been free. I've always just made rent selling my music. I am no man's treasured son, and I do not have a trust fund. I just got a 15-day notice on the power, and I start interviews 15 days from now. I hate dealing with that shit, because it factors so seldom into my commitment. I don't get depressed about money and stop working. I just work angry."

#### OPENING DOORS

Whatever the fuel, Adam and his compatriots have boiled down what it is to be Subtle and rebuilt from that nucleus. They sample themselves to make albums, connect those albums with recurring motifs and structures, and re-make the songs therein afterward, inviting the like-minded to reinterpret myth and music. (Each new record is followed by a collection of collaborations with people like Mike Patton, Chris Adams of Hood, and TV on the Radio's Tunde Adebimpe.) Likewise, Adam continues the myth by revisiting writings from across his career, plucking out unanswered phrases and letting them unravel.

Subtle has gone so far and so purely down their own path, they've created context unto themselves. What does your new *Raconteurs* record mean resting on a shelf next to *ExitingARM*? Who knows, but one just sits, while the other sprawls as far as imagination will allow. What Subtle makes has roots and branches, leaves fallen and leaves fresh. It's "choose your own adventure" done right. And this is their truest accomplishment: a self-contained universe of art and exploration.

"We hoped Subtle to be big from the beginning and, for us, it's as big as our art can get." Sleep is approaching and Drucker's words are showing signs of surrender. My lids are falling. "We do our best in every single way and, more than anything, I hope that's what's in the music. I think people hear this and, at the very least, there's a little bit more of a door that's ajar, and it don't lead to nowhere but somewhere healthy."

And so, we close our eyes and dream.

Subtle's *ExitingARM* is out now on Lex Records.  
[subtle6.com](http://subtle6.com), [lexrecords.com](http://lexrecords.com)

#### THE GOOD GHOSTS

After Subtle's tour van was broken into in Spain, Adam had a dream in which he painted portraits of fans to make back the money they'd lost. Several hundred Subtle patrons sent in \$15 and a picture, and Adam sent back a painting to each. These "Good Ghosts" make up the cover of *ExitingARM*. Here, Adam chooses a few to talk about.



#### POET'S WIFE

This woman was so stunning, I could not paint her for weeks. She even looked good on my out-of-ink printout. For me, fine woman beauty is far more complex than other types, a bit beyond my pen, so to speak.



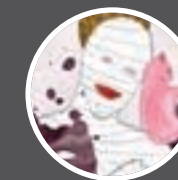
#### FEARBOY

The perspective and moment captured in his photo were perfect. He became one of the portraits that actually makes eye contact with you. He is the Chicken Little of the Good Ghosts.



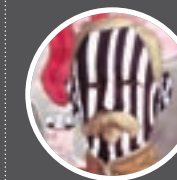
#### AIRBUD

Pets were a blast to render. This poor dog... In the photo, he was rolling on his back on a hardwood floor; now he's in mid-flight. I later realized that I hope all these pets and people that I "angel-fied" never die. I'd hate to go all awful-omen-artist.



#### MYMUMMY

I recognized this gentleman from a merch booth conversation somewhere. Since our wonderful soundman and unofficial seventh member Patrick Scott has a mummy obsession, and this young man had his arms crossed, I made him our lucky mummy.



#### HOOR HERO YES

Yes is dressed to kill in his honest armor and thin skin, prepared to protect the cave of his chest with a wildest guess, wearing his perpetual motifs like medals, staring resolute with age and all fairness at whatever steps in front of him.



To see more of Doseone's drawings, visit [XLR8R.com/118extras](http://XLR8R.com/118extras).

Since 1990, ragga MCs have held sway at raves and dance clubs, bigging up the DJs, chatting a quick 32 bars, and finishing with an emphatic call to the "Massive!" The U.K. established the ragga MC tradition with old-school breakbeat and jungle jugglers like Tenor Fly, General Levy, Navigator, and Ragga Twins—a tradition that continues today with British dubstep heavies like Flowdan and Doctor. In the '80s and '90s, U.S.-based MCs like Mad Lion and

Jamalski began mixing Jamaican flows with hip-hop and other styles, but only recently has America developed a competent ragga corps.

MCs like Collage, Zulu, Juakali, Lexie Lee, and 77klash are shocking the party with their dancehall fusion flows, at events like New York's Dub War, San Francisco's Surya Dub, and Los Angeles' Smog. But they're no longer just hosts or hype men—they're launching careers as artists and producers as well. In the process, these new-era North

American toasters are pushing dancehall beyond its boundaries, chatting over traditional tracks but also collaborating with dub, bhangra, and grime producers, including Chicago's DJ C, Montreal's Ghislain Poirier, San Francisco's Kush Arora, and New York's David Last and Matt Shadetek. And all five shine with fresh lyrics and innovative vocal styles—not just riding the rhythm, but challenging it. *Tomas Palermo*

U.S. RAGGA MCs INFILTRATE  
THE ELECTRONIC UNDERGROUND.

CHICAGO'S MIC WARRIOR  
IS A REBEL WITH A REASON.

## Chicago's Dominique Rowland,

known as MC Zulu, has a booming baritone voice that almost knocks you over. Whether he's spitting his signature line "Spread the word!" or chatting political lyrics, Zulu's vocal presence is unmistakable. It's not just the oral intonation but also his clipped phrases, stopping mid-sentence like a flicking typewriter's carriage before starting the next line. "Some guy called it reverse sixteenth notes," explains Rowland of his style of messing with word patterns, which he calls "digital screw." "There's no set way [I do it]," he says. "It just has to make sense phonetically and lyrically."

Fans and labels alike are embracing Zulu's novel flow, which appears on collaborations with L.A. hip-hop MC Aceyalone, Midwest producer DJ C, San Francisco bhangra-ragga fusionist Kush Arora, and Montreal bass freaker Ghislain Poirier, to name a few. Due to his underground status, Rowland calls himself the White Label Menace. But if recent trends continue, it might not be long before he's major.

"Zulu is so professional," says Poirier of their work together. "He has the skills to do subtle things like harmony and superb back-up vocals." Chicago's Jake "DJ C" Trussell agrees. "Zulu is one of the most talented ragga vocalists out there today, in the U.S. or anywhere."

Serious but easygoing, Rowland's varied life experiences have played a strong role in his artistic development. Born in Panama to U.S.-military parents, Rowland's family lineage stretches throughout the Caribbean. His family moved to Chicago in the 1980s and settled in a predominantly white neighborhood where ignorant schoolmates derogatorily called the new kid Zulu. The name took on a new meaning after Rowland studied South Africa's fierce Zulu freedom fighters and was inspired by Afrika Bambaataa's Zulu Nation, events that sharpened his music's political content. But Rowland cautions, "I try not to lean [politically] to one side or the other. Fuck all of them, for real."

Instead, Rowland's lyrical approach on solo albums like *Riddim Killah* (Manatee) or the Kush Arora collaboration *From Brooklyn to SF* (KAM) focuses on putting "bodies in motion" with his innovative dancehall cadence. Overall, Rowland is humble about his role as a ragga ambassador, stating that he's merely a dancehall-influenced artist.

"Jamaicans are the kings of reggae," he says. "We need to approach [it] with some respect and humility. Americans tend not to do that." *Tomas Palermo*

DJ C & Zulu's *Gods & Robots* is out now as a digital-only release on Mashit.  
[myspace.com/zulumusic](http://myspace.com/zulumusic)

# JUAKALI

A TRINIDADIAN TOASTER TAKES THE NEW YORK DUBSTEP SCENE BY STORM, BY STORM,

## “I’ve never thought of myself as an MC,”

reveals John Lashley reluctantly over the phone from his home in New York. Lashley, who performs as Juakali, wasn’t billed as “MC” until 2006, after his residency at NYC dubstep party Dub War started picking up steam. “The only way people associate a reggae artist toasting over electronic music is through drum & bass,” he says ruefully. “I’m not even a drum & bass head anyway!”

Nonetheless, Lashley is using his ragga vocal talents to break the typical MC mold. In addition to mic duties at Big Apple monthlies Dub War and Sub Swara, he performs with the Dub Liberation Front band, and recently opened for Meat Beat Manifesto at their NYC show. But it’s overseas travels that have yielded the Trinidadian-born artist the most opportunities, including his first vinyl single, which was recently issued on Czech label Gunjah. “I wanted people to understand that even though I’m involved in electronic music, this is where I’m coming from,” says Lashley of the track, a straight roots reggae number entitled “Run Babylon.”

Reggae influences have remained at the forefront of his collaborations with Bristol dubstep producer Pinch, U.K. digital dub artists Alpha and Omega, and American electronic music fusionists Moldy and Kush Arora. “Juakali is taking a traditional style and blending it in new ways,” says Arora. “He’s showing that Caribbean culture won’t be left behind in the ashes of the digital revolution.”

Lately, Lashley’s revolution has been realized at Dub War. “[At dubstep events], I can switch a flow three times in one song, where in dancehall or reggae you can’t really do that,” he says. Dub War has become a forum for him to try new verses or songs that eventually end up on record.

Lashley, who has a new album in the works, believes that, in the age of iPod mixes and file-sharing, listeners are more hyped on live shows than ever. “Going to a concert is a bigger deal than getting the DVD of the concert,” he says. And if you expect to catch Juakali any time soon, you’ll have to leave the house. “I’m trying to pay rent, so I *have* to get out on the road and play live!” *Tomas Palermo*

foreignfamiliar.com



AN L.A. FIRECRACKER GETS DUTTY ... RESPONSIBLY,

## “I’m not gonna talk about

how tight my vagina is,” Lexie Lee states emphatically, just moments into our interview. An undeniably headstrong woman in the undeniably slack and male-ego-driven world of dancehall, she has apparently had to reiterate the statement on more than a few occasions.

“I love sexuality,” the Montego Bay-reared, Los Angeles-based deejay says when asked about the suggestive content in her own songs, which include titles like “Pull It Up” and “Keep it Duttiah.” “I’m a woman—it’s part of [me]. But it should be expressed *res-pon-sib-ly*. The AIDS epidemic is still exploding in Jamaica, 70% of black children in the U.S. are born to single-family households... You can’t just be throwing your dick and pussy out all over the place.”

While advancing the female perspective within dancehall is clearly one of her agendas, Lee takes issue with being labeled a dancehall artist, preferring to describe her style as “grindcore.” “Categorization is bullshit,” she says. “I’m gonna do what makes me happy.”

What makes her happy includes spending much of her time in Europe, where she tours regularly and has recorded remixes with U.K. garage producers Paleface and Sticky. She has even set up an office for her record label, Manslave, in Leipzig, Germany. “[The music we release is] never gonna be straight-up dancehall or straight-up rap,” she says.

A compilation, *Di Preparation*, which features mostly previously released Manslave material, will be out in Europe this summer (with an international, digital-only release shortly thereafter). On the record, you’ll find Lee spitting over dutty riddims, plus crisp hip-hop beats from L.A. producer J-Hits. On lead single “Bye Bye Bye” she matches her fierce, sassy flow (think Lady Saw and Tanya Stephens with a dash of Lil’ Kim and Amy Winehouse) to a typically leftfield track from Florida’s South Rakkas Crew (of Chinkuzi riddim and Mad Decent fame).

Meanwhile, her upcoming “real debut album,” tentatively titled *Di Intro*, has drawn significant label interest—though she had to nix negotiations with one major U.S. label after an exec emailed her pictures of his penis.

“Obviously this dude was just one crazy fuck, but [overall] it’s never been about getting a deal for me,” she says. “I’m more interested in getting my little label set up and my blueprint down so [if I do sign], they can just follow the format that’s already set.”

*Jesse Senwer*

lexielee.com



THE APTLY NAMED MR. CHATMAN RESURRECTS THAT RAW RAGGA SOUND.

### Lawrence Chatman's alias, DJ Collage,

aptly describes his patchwork of styles and his eclectic resume, which includes collaborations with breakbeat innovators Meat Beat Manifesto, house hippies Dubtribe, and Canadian Celtic bhangra crew Delhi2Dublin. But even though his Supercat-inspired flow makes perfect sense over downtempo, future ragga, and deep house, there has been some confusion when it comes to his name.

"People at the electronic clubs keep asking me what type of music I spin," says Chatman of his "DJ" prefix. "The dancehall and Caribbean community I come from [understands] it means 'vocal MC,' but outside that community they [don't] get it." To remedy things, Lawrence is undergoing a transition from DJ Collage to Mr. Chatman, which is the name he'll use for his debut album, *Marathon Man*, out this summer on his own Masse One label. Chatman, who was born in Chicago but now resides in Seattle (via stints in Oakland, CA and Vienna, Austria), hopes the album will further showcase his talents as a solo producer and artist.

Album tracks like "Bombay Rock," "Big Mon Now," and "Mi Rite Time" (produced by his *other* alias Dutty Larry) feature catchy choruses and vocal hooks—no surprise, as Chatman readily admits to being a pop music fan. Though he could have called on previous collaborators like Sofa Surfers, Stereotyp, or Ghislain Poirier to help on the record, Chatman opted for a more personal statement. "I like working with people and exposing myself to different artists, but at the same time I want people to hear where I'm coming from," he explains.

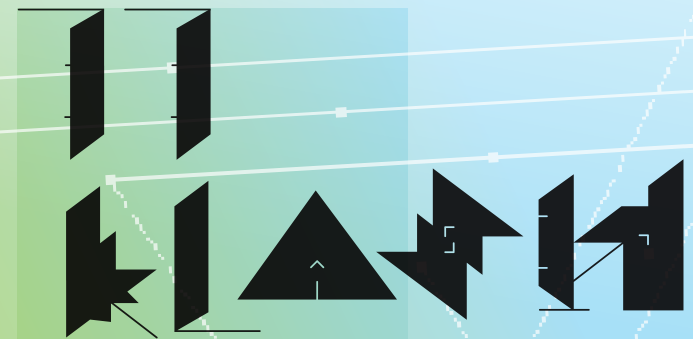
Lately, fans are hearing him at opening sets for Yellowman, Sly and Robbie, Collie Buddz, and Kode 9, and at his weekly Monday night reggae party Jam Jam at Seattle's Baltic Room. "I'm what they call a 'vibes man,'" says Chatman of his performance mindset. "It's about self-expression and what people feel from the music."

"I was influenced by Supercat, Cutty Ranks, Nicodemus, Shaggy, Red Fox—the whole late '80s and early '90s New York reggae explosion," says Chatman, noting that music from that era had urban street cred and Caribbean flavor. "It was raw!" he says. "That's the vibe that I want to bring back. Although times have changed, when I look at people's reactions when they hear that raw beat—they really respond to it!"

Tomas Palermo

[myspace.com/djcollage](http://myspace.com/djcollage)

FROM BROOKLYN TO JAMAICA, A RAGGA RENEGADE PUNKS UP THE DANCEHALL.



### As the son of a noted Rastafarian

poetess and the cousin of former Shabba Ranks musical director Dr. Paul, Mikkel "Gize" Burrowes (a.k.a. 77klash) was born into reggae. By the age of 12, he was even playing percussion with Junior Reid's One Blood Band. But when the Brooklyn-based deejay and producer returned to Kingston in 2005 with a post-genre rhythm called Scallawah, he may as well have been from another planet.

"Everybody told me this sound would never pop in Jamaica," Klash says. "But I was seeing from how [Jamaican] kids were dressing, they were open to this whole [punk] vibe but weren't being exposed to it."

While Scallawah didn't exactly change the game, it gave Jamaican singjay Turbulence his biggest hit to date with the sublime "Notorious," and confirmed Klash's hunch that progressive, punk-inspired dancehall could translate inna yard. Back in the States, he turned his attention mic-ward, linking with grime-influenced NYC production unit Team Shadetek for the '06 single "Brooklyn Anthem." While "Brooklyn Anthem" received underground love, dancehall audiences slept on the track until it appeared in *Madden NFL '08*.

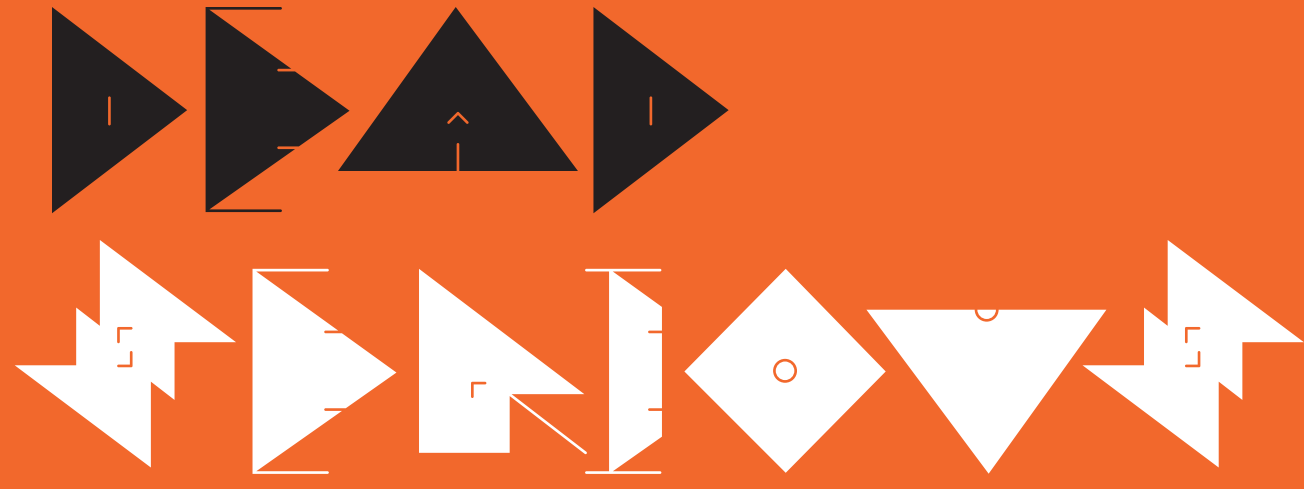
"It was too weird—DJs weren't feeling it at all," Klash says. "But after [noted producer] Stephen McGregor changed the tempo of dancehall, people accepted it. It became a staple at teen parties in Brooklyn. There's kids on YouTube dancing to the rhythm who have more hits than me."

Having scored his second breakthrough rhythm last year with The Swarm (the basis for Aidonia's "Ah You"), he recently dropped his first artist release, *Code for the Streets*, on his own Klash City label. The EP finds Klash spitting on beats from Federation Sound and Matt Shadetek as well as his own understated tracks. "I call it dancehall but it's not really dancehall until the vocals touch it," Klash says. "I try to keep [the rhythms] as minimalistic as possible and use sounds effectively."

In addition to recent production work for Ari Up of The Slits and a new project with Matt Shadetek and "Brooklyn Anthem" singer Jahdan Blakkamore called Iron Shirt, Klash is working on tracks for his upcoming debut LP with John Hill, the producer behind Santogold.

"People who are coming out with new, different sounds all gotta stick together and appreciate and love what each other's doing," Klash says. "Cause we're changing the sound of music, basically." *Jesse Serwer*

*Code for the Streets* is out now on Klash City. [klashcityrecords.com](http://klashcityrecords.com)



REVOLUTIONARY HIP-HOP ARTIST  
**IMMORTAL TECHNIQUE** TAKES ACTION  
ON THE MIC AND THE STREETS



WORDS: MAX HERMAN PHOTOS: PAUL O'VALLE

“Lots of people in America know that the system is fucked up. All of them know it. I think everybody in this country knows the government’s corrupt. They’re conscious of it, but they’re not gonna do a fucking thing about it. There are people that will, and me, I consider those people revolutionary.”

These are the words of 30-year-old rapper Immortal Technique. Not satisfied with being labeled a “conscious MC,” for the past decade, this Peruvian-born New Yorker’s aim in life has reached beyond the confines of the rap game.

Since stirring up the underground with his self-released debut, 2001’s *Revolutionary Vol. 1*, Tech has had hip-hop fans listening intently to his unflinching political perspectives and fiery flow enhanced by rugged East Coast production. Balancing “humility with brutal instinct,” he rails about puppet democracies in war-torn countries and the racist history of European religion and colonialism. Sometimes he seems to spit lines just to get a rise out of people; on “Leaving the Past,” for example, he raps: “I’ll do a free show in North Korea burning the flag/While J. Edgar Hoover politicians dress up in drag.”

When not delivering a revolution in the form of hip-hop, the MC born Felipe Coronel has made his ultimate priority fighting numerous injustices in Third World countries—most recently beginning a dialogue with fellow recording artists and Hollywood filmmakers in an effort to stop the United States’ embargo against Cuba.

As such, it took weeks of waiting to get Immortal Technique on the phone. When I did, music was almost a secondary topic of conversation. Tech was as eager to talk about his daily revolutionary work as his forthcoming album, *The 3rd World*.

#### FIGHT CLUB

To understand Immortal Technique, it’s vital to know that he was born into violence, coming into this world in a Peruvian military hospital shortly before the country’s civil war—a conflict that began in 1980 and lasted for nearly 20 years. While Tech has lived in the U.S. since the early ’80s, he hasn’t exactly evaded a hostile life, growing up in the streets of Spanish Harlem and then getting locked up for assault charges during his first year of college. Even if Tech has tamed his hotheadedness since being paroled in 1999, one gets the sense that he’s still down to throw his fists up at a moment’s notice, if necessary.

Tech started his career as a hungry battle rapper straight out of the penitentiary. His aggressive approach helped him win renowned East Coast battles like Rocksteady and gain the respect of peers such as Poison Pen, as well as a shout-out in *The Source*’s Unsigned Hype column. Growing tired of label limitations and promoters’ hidden agendas, Tech began recording independently via Viper Records. His only albums, *Revolutionary Vols. 1* and *2*, saw Tech channel the ruthlessness of battling into tracks with more substantial subject matter.

#### WORLD TOWN

“Music is really just a small part of my life. It is only the beginning of what I have begun working on,” writes Tech in a recent journal entry on MySpace. The bulk of the piece is a personal narrative about a childhood friend who was unjustly beaten by the boys in blue. When he opens a dialogue with fans, asking them to share their stories of overzealous policemen, hundreds of responses roll in.

“I don’t consider myself an activist,” asserts Tech. “I’m not an embedded reporter—I’m holding a weapon and I’m in the field. I do revolutionary work. And it’s not that I don’t respect other people for marching or doing whatever, but I always felt that for me, personally, I have to take a more proactive approach.”

Being proactive doesn’t always mean getting dirty in the trenches of war. On a recent trip to his native Peru, Tech spent much of his time cultivating a farm he bought a few years back. On 300-plus acres of land he grows beans, corn, papayas, and other produce with the help of his family and an agricultural engineer. Aside from any financial gain, the purpose of the farm is to give the people more control of their own resources.

“Rather than doing what agribusiness would want me to do—which



“I’M NOT AN EMBEDDED REPORTER—I’M HOLDING A WEAPON  
AND I’M IN THE FIELD.”

is to just to sell all my goods to America and then whatever doesn’t pass inspection sell it back to [my] own people—I’m trying to set a different standard down there,” he explains.

In addition to the farm, Tech is proud to own his home in Harlem, a neighborhood he refuses to leave even amid ongoing gentrification. “No matter how many brownstones white people buy, shit is still real out here,” he wrote in the liner notes to 2003’s *Revolutionary Vol. 2* (Viper Records/Nature Sounds).

Tech does much of his work from his home office. If he’s not on tour or traveling in South America, an average day starts with a workout before hours spent on the phone or the computer connecting with anyone willing to help overturn the backwards policies of countless governments.

“It’s not like everyday we have a focus group or some shit, but I regularly communicate with people, whether it be in the Central American community or ... the Palestinian community,” explains Tech. “There are lots of things of concern to me and I’m more than willing to have [an] open discussion with people whose perspective I really want to understand.”

Not one to surround himself with yes men, Tech makes it a point to talk with those who carry radically different views. “I want to understand other people’s perspectives—even with right-wing Cubans, I’m open to having dialogues,” he says. “As long as these things are respectful and people know I’m from the street, they don’t try to pull no bullshit on me. So most of the time, they’re all very civil, fact-driven discussions.”



"PEOPLE WILL SAY  
THAT THEY'RE  
POOR BECAUSE  
THEY LIVE IN THE  
PROJECTS...

TRY LIVING IN A  
FUCKING FAVELA."

#### MORTAL COMBAT

Due to his continued efforts outside of the studio, it has been more than four years since Immortal Technique's *Revolutionary Vol. 2* hit the streets. While his next album was supposed to be *The Middle Passage*, Tech pulled a sneak attack earlier this year when he announced that his next full-length would be called *The 3rd World*, presented in conjunction with DJ Green Lantern of Sirius Radio fame and the producer behind Tech's last single, "Bin Laden."

In Tech's words, *The 3rd World* is "essentially an album that's put together like a mixtape," with Green Lantern occasionally making his presence known on intros and interludes and the songs seamlessly segueing into one another. Mixtape or not, the subject matter and beats are as raw as ever. The proof can be heard on the heated title track, which details the difference between the hood in America and in Third World countries over a Peruvian-sounding flute loop. With a particularly feverish growl, he spits, "I'm from where Soviet weapons still decide elections/ Military's like the mafia, you pay for protection."

"People [in the U.S.] will say that they're poor because they live in the projects," he says, explaining the song. "It's like, 'Word, nigga? Try living in a fucking favela.' Whatever complaint that you have is magnified when you live out there."

*The 3rd World*, which features guest appearances from Chino XL and Ras Kass, is not just a literal document of what life is like in nations such as Peru, Cuba, and El Salvador, it also makes a statement about people reclaiming their natural resources, whether it's South American farmers or indie hip-hop artists. Moreover, on songs like "Mistakes," Tech stresses the importance of self-responsibility and living up to one's own actions. He will be the first to admit to certain shortcomings—like the way "wylin' on the corner" got him turned back from the Canadian border.

Immortal Technique has never claimed to be above criticism, but the one thing you can't call him is lethargic. This hip-hop firebrand intends to tirelessly combat political and social injustice in the same way he used to clash MCs in a cipher. "Originally when I was writing rhymes, I was still a battle rapper," recalls Tech of his transformation. "I realized that I had much bigger battles to fight than with whatever local rapper was hot in Brooklyn or the Bronx or Harlem or wherever. I was like, 'What am I really fighting over?'"

Immortal Technique's *The 3rd World* is out June 24th on Viper/Koch.  
[immortal-technique.com](http://immortal-technique.com)

To Read about Immortal Technique's favorite revolutionary at [xlr8r.com/118extras](http://xlr8r.com/118extras).



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FRANCE'S **YELLE** MAKES FAIRYTALE ELECTRO-POP  
FOR THE LOVER IN YOU.



Yelle's *Pop-Up* is the perfect album for teenage girls. It makes one think of pink bedrooms, princess phones, and neon-painted nails; sugary-sweet candy and sun-dappled afternoons spent calling secret crushes and giggling down the line. It achieves this effect even if you don't understand the French-only lyrics, which explore every relationship-related thought that races through a young girl's mind, from the ups 'n' downs of lovers' games ("Ce Jeu") to lesbian fantasies ("Les Femmes") to dissing boys because they suck ("Je Veux Te Voir," "Dans Ta Vrai Vie"). There's even a veiled ode to masturbation/sex toys ("Mon Meilleur Ami"), in the vein of Cyndi Lauper's "She Bop."

This could easily be annoying, but it's charming instead—like the best American pop, *Pop-Up* is funny, naïve, and sometimes dirty, but it's also smart, and backed by extremely catchy electronic beats crafted by producers Tepr (a.k.a. Tanguy Destable) and Grand Marnier (Jean-François Perrier). Yelle herself is 25-year-old Julie Budet, a lanky, doe-eyed singer/erstwhile rapper with a taste for fluorescent leggings, high-top Reeboks, and sassy comebacks.

Budet and Perrier hail from Brittany in northwest France, a rocky piece of countryside by the sea known for cider, crepes, and medieval monuments. The two met seven years ago at a high-school party; Budet was in a pop band, and Perrier was a drummer in a Beastie Boys-esque rap-rock outfit. In 2005, they started working on tracks in Perrier's bedroom, and quickly completed "Short Dick Cuizi" (later to become "Je Veux Te Voir"), a track dissing TTC rapper Cuizinier for his pyjama-like t-shirts and lack of sexual prowess. Internet hype and a deal with eclectic French label Source Etc. followed, and electro-house producer Tepr—who already had two albums out on the little-known idwet label—was brought into the fold to help knock out a full-length in a little over eight months.

The three have been touring nonstop since *Pop-Up* was completed, striking a chord with

their catchy songs and Budet's on-stage charm, which is a much more accessible brand of cool than that of a certain Parisian ingénue whom she's often pitted against. We took the trio for peppermint tea and cupcakes at New York City bakery Sugar Sweet Sunshine, and found them to be just as cute and nice as their music implies.

**XLR8R: Did you have a concept for the project when you started?**

*Yelle:* We just wanted to make music that was really fresh and really happy. At the time there were a lot of French bands making heartbroken, depressing songs, like 'My life is really hard and I'm not happy.' It was important for us to make music to make people dance and smile and have fun.

**What kind of stuff did you sing when you were little?**

*Yelle:* I looked like Madonna. I was always singing in front of my mirror, inventing some lyrics about my dogs or my friends or my life. It was like a fairytale. Since I was a little girl I've lived in a kind of dream. I'm always thinking everything will be better, a kind of utopia.

**Did you have a fairytale childhood?**

*Yelle:* Yeah. For me, it is really difficult to talk about problems because I had no problems when I was young. I was a bad student when I was in high school, but that's because I was dreaming all the time.

**You went pretty quickly from making songs in a bedroom studio to being on stage at festivals. Was it difficult to perform live initially?**

*Yelle:* It wasn't really difficult to get onstage for the first time because I did theater for seven years. The first show was in Paris in November 2006 at this very trendy club called Paris Paris. I was really frightened because it was the beginning of our internet success, and it was really hard for me to imagine how it would go. I said to myself, 'If I can do this tonight, it will be okay after. If it's really hard tonight, maybe it will be really difficult in the future.' The crowd was really cool and after that I thought, 'Okay, I can do this.'

**Do you think of Yelle as a character?**

*Yelle:* It's not a character. It's a part of me who can explode on stage and have more fun than in real life. I'm not a shy girl, but maybe just a little... When I'm Yelle, I like to wear more colorful clothes and be sexier.

**You've made the perfect happy pop album. What's next?**

*Yelle:* I'm a big fan of Depeche Mode, their sound and melodies. I'm a big fan of M.I.A., too; this crunk style she has, really hard and really rude. I would like to mix the two and make something powerful, but with lots of work on the melodies and harmonies, and maybe with instruments like violins. I would still like to make pop music, though, because that's my culture.

**Did you have a certain feeling you were going for with this record?**

*Tepr:* It was more about a state of mind than specific bands. For "Tu es Beau" we wanted to have a very '90s Eric Serra feeling [he scored Luc Besson movies].

*Grand Marnier:* When we were doing the record I was thinking about that American sitcom *Parker Lewis Can't Lose*. That funny spirit but filled with teenage angst and teenage stories. Conquering the world with flashy colors and a cool state of mind.

*Tepr:* In "Les Femmes," which is a very special slow song about homosexual love between girls... by the end of the song I was in the clouds with rainbows and unicorns and teddy bears on clouds. And Teletubbies. It's more about color and picture references than music.



WE  
ARE  
NOT

100%  
CUTE

**This is, obviously, a very cute record. What do you guys think is cute personally?**

*Grand Marnier:* Cupcakes.

*Tepr:* A Shetland pony running in the fields.  
*Grand Marnier:* By cute, do you mean sweet? Adorable? I love cereal boxes, especially Rice Krispies. I'm in love with whoever designed that box. It's one of the things I think is very cute and nobody cares about it. Oh, and I like when girls have a space between their two front teeth—if a girl has that, I automatically like her.

*Tepr:* I like when a girl has a lot of freckles, like the Milky Way.

*Grand Marnier:* Yeah, I also like when a girl's eyes are slightly cross-eyed. Just a little bit off. Very small. Very precise.

**Precise imperfection, eh? What track are you most happy with on the album?**

*Grand Marnier:* "Les Femmes." We wrote it in the studio as an emergency last song. It was really intensive to compose and I love the result. It's modern and pop and slow. I love "Tristesse/Joie" too.

*Tepr:* My favorite song on the album is "Mon Meilleur Ami." It's a song about dildos and stuff like that. It's not about the lyrics though; I like it because it's an uptempo song with a dirty bassline and lots of claps. It's really ghetto, really club, really dance—it's the other side of Yelle. When we perform that song live it's always really tense. I like that part of Yelle a lot.

**Was writing the album difficult?**

*Grand Marnier:* Not difficult but irregular. Some days I was very inspired and I wrote two songs a day. Sometimes I would do nothing for two months. I was afraid because I didn't know if I was able to make an album. I didn't know how inspiration comes. When you don't know what your creative process is, you can't trust yourself. In the end, I learned there are no rules. Patience is often the best.  
*Tepr:* We thought we were not good enough at mixing. We did the songs, we did a pre-mix, and we were happy with it but then we thought, 'Yeah, let's go to a big studio and mix it again.' In the end, it was not better, just more clean.

**How did you two work together?**

*Tepr:* During the studio sessions, I was usually finishing a song while he was producing a new one. He was fast to write new lyrics and I was fast to record the keyboards. He likes cheesy gimmicks. At first when I would listen to stuff I'd be like, 'You can't do that,' and then it would get into my head.

*Grand Marnier:* I really like simple and catchy melodies, like cartoon sounds and ringtones.

**Did you ever get to a point where all this cute happy stuff made you crazy?**

*Grand Marnier:* There is not only cuteness. The songs have a basis of bass, which is often fat. When we are in the studio composing sometimes we just have fun and play hardcore. We are [balanced]. We are not 100 percent cute.

*Tepr:* We both come from hardcore music. I'm a big fan of Refused, and he's a big fan of

Biohazard and 25 Ta Life. That's our stuff. But we did songs with clouds and teddy bears for the girls.

**What's one song or track you wish you had made?**

*Grand Marnier:* "Faith" by George Michael. It's got a perfect balance between the rhythm and the melody, and such an ambiance.

*Tepr:* "Shake the Disease" from Depeche Mode. It's like four tracks in one, it keeps changing and it's very complicated. It's very special and very mainstream at the same time, and I love that kind of song.

**What is the weirdest thing for you about America?**

*Grand Marnier:* People are always hugging for everything!

*Tepr:* They're always saying, 'That's amazing. You're really amaaaazing. I looove you.'

Sometimes it's too much for us.

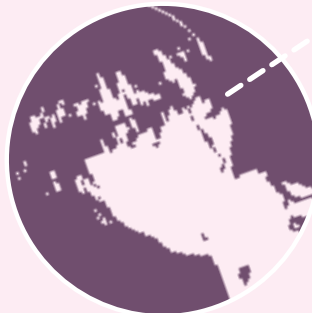
*Grand Marnier:* We don't know what to say to that because in France you are more just being gentle and polite all the time. In the last two days we've met so many people for the first time and they're like 'You're amazing!' But that's cool... it's not a problem.

*Tepr:* Yeah. We will go back to France and be like, 'Hey, we have a lot of fans in New York.' And the next time we come back and the same people will maybe be like, 'Hi,' and that's it.

Yelle's *Pop-Up* is out now on Source/Astralwerks. [iloveyelle.com](http://iloveyelle.com), [astralwerks.com](http://astralwerks.com)

## TEEN BEAT!

The Yelle team answers cute questions about girls and candy.



### ♥ YELLE

*What's your birthday?*  
January 17, 1983. Capricorn.

*What is the best thing you own?*  
I always have to have a big purse with me.

*What quality do you like most in guys?*  
Humor. It's the most important for me. I couldn't be with a guy who doesn't say some stupid, funny things.

*What quality do you like the least?*  
Boys who don't have clean nails.

*What's your favorite candy?*  
Marshmallows.

### ♥ GRAND MARINER

*When's your birthday?*  
July 14, 1981. Cancer.

*What is the best thing you own?*  
My motorbike. It's a small 125 Yamaha. It's grey.

*What quality do you like most in girls?*  
Passion.

*What quality do you like the least?*  
Girls with too many mannerisms, like always talking loud, waving their hands around, trying to act cute....

*What's your favorite candy?*  
Chocolate little bears with marshmallow in them.

### ♥ TEPR

*When's your birthday?*  
May 23, 1980. Gemini.

*What is the best thing you own?*  
My MacBook.

*What quality do you like most in girls?*  
It makes me hurt each time but... ambitious girls.

*What quality do you like the least?*  
Ambition.

*What's your favorite candy?*  
Must be Mars bars.



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**Special thanks to**  
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Less, Buchita, Roberto  
Hernandez for lending  
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Taxis Joyeria.

Mayra wears earrings and chain bracelet by [Cubannie Links](#), "Union" nameplate necklace by [Union L.A.](#), custom air-brushed tank by [The Zone](#), jeans by [Judi Rosen](#), mary-janes from [Pearl River Mart](#) (NY). All other jewelry model's own.



Jen wears earrings and necklace by Cubannie Links, t-shirt by Upper Playground, shorts by Renegade, vintage Nike Cortez shoes. Nameplate necklace and all other accessories stylist's own.





Vanessa wears "Mi Vida Loca" necklace by [Mama](#), dress by [Nicacelly](#), vintage [Nike](#) Cortez shoes, earrings stylist's own. All other jewelry is model's own.

Yadira wears t-shirt and nameplate necklace by [Mama](#), Tupac rosary by [Cubannie Links](#), vintage bootleg [Nike](#) belt from The Goods!, jeans by [Judi Rosen](#), and vintage [Nike](#) Cortez. All other jewelry stylist's own.

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## Augustus Pablo

# Album Reviews 6.08



### A FOUR-DISC SET SHOWCASES THE MYSTICAL DUB LEGEND'S BODY OF WORK AND ITS TIMELESS INFLUENCE.

#### AUGUSTUS PABLO: THE MYSTICAL WORLD OF AUGUSTUS PABLO: THE ROCKERS STORY Shanachie/US/4CD

By now, the late Augustus Pablo's contributions to music are well known to reggae and dub fans. One of Jamaica's most inspirational musicians and producers, Pablo's name is often uttered in hushed tones with the same reverence usually reserved for sacred voices like Nesta Marley, Jacob Miller, and Burning Spear. A contemporary (and sometime collaborator) of not only Miller, but dub originators Lee "Scratch" Perry and King Tubby—"King Tubby Meets the Rockers Uptown," Pablo's Tubby-fied version of Miller's "Baby I Love You So," not only presents its own holy trinity, but stands as one of the seminal dub classics—Pablo's spiritual influence on roots reggae is easily comparable to John Coltrane's cathartic effect on jazz. Pablo strove not for commercial success but for purity of form—an unthinkable ideology in today's dancehall-dominated climate. Unlike many Jamaican musicians, he didn't over-record; his low-key nature and disdain for the spotlight—he reportedly disappeared into the hills for months at a time in between albums—probably prevented him from being fully appreciated in his lifetime.

It's not a stretch to call Pablo the most natural of reggae's mystics, or the most innovative of dub's masters; his style of dub may even be the wisest. While men like Tubby, Scientist, and Scratch were brilliant arrangers and engineers in their own right, Pablo's trademark minor-key melodica and keyboard playing made him much more than a mere knob-twiddler. As dub's echoes have gradually spread across other continents, Pablo's aesthetic influence can be heard not only in frontline electronic acts like Thievery Corporation, Jazzanova, and Boozoo Bajou, but in the layered subtleties of IDM, downtempo, broken beat, nu-jazz, and dubstep artists all over the globe.

There have been other Pablo collections before—including

*Original Rockers*, a stellar one-disc effort from the short-lived Island Jamaica imprint—but there's never been as comprehensive a look into the man, the mystery, and the music as *The Mystic World of Augustus Pablo: The Rockers Story*. A staggering 68 songs deep, the set stands as a testament to the fact that, despite his legendary reputation, Pablo was somewhat underrated as a producer. Vocal licks for artists like Jr. Delgado, Johnny Osborne, Earl Sixteen, The Immortals, The Heptones, and Hugh Mundell prove that Pablo was just as capable of building a track as deconstructing one; yet as solid as these a-sides sound, they're outdone by Pablo's duppy-cleansing dub rinses and meditative instrumentals like "555 Dub," "One Step Dub," and "Rockers Meet King Tubby Ina Firehouse," which feel like they were lovingly steamed inside an itil calabash for weeks before being pressed onto tape.

Pablo's world is subdivided into quadrants: Classic Rockers, Roots Rockers, New Style Rockers, and Rarities. The discs bookend each other, to a degree. Classic Rockers serves up Pablo's most-recognizable tracks, like "East of the River Nile," "Keep on Dubbing," and "Africa Must Be Free." Rarities fuels collectors' drool with sublimely obscure songs like "Third Eye," "Twin Seal," "Higgy Higgy," and one of the set's standouts, Sister Frica's "One in the Spirit." With tunes like "Pablo Red in a Dream" (a slow-bubbling version of Yabby You's "Conquering Lion"), Roots Rockers could easily have been called "Classic Rockers II." Meanwhile, New Style Rockers captures late-period Pablo (including Delgado's "Raggamuffin Year" and "One Step More") majestically. Amazingly, there's no fall-off in quality whatsoever over this four-disc set covering several decades of dub—just layers of sound and space. *Eric K. Arnold*





Photo: Eric Magrini

## Power Douglas

### POWER DOUGLAS PENTECOSTAL FANGBREAD

FiveSixMedia/US/CD  
Never mind wondering who Power Douglas is or what *Pentecostal Fangbread* means; just look at the cover of this noisy NY trio's debut—a picture of MLK's assassination with witnesses pointing toward "Power Douglas" and two dudes on the side in a red-handed embrace—and you know you're in for some shit. Signed to King Britt's FiveSixMedia, Power Douglas is comprised of eccentric vocalist Furor Thin and multi-instrumentalists Tim Harp and Jesse Crawford, who compose a genre-bending hybrid of post-modern punk and hip-hop, with Furor Thin howling all kinds of weirdness ("Our manganese children fallapian powers will drown clouds!") over skittery, distorted beats. Featuring Tunde Adebimpe of TV on the Radio and members of Dragons of Zynth on a few tracks, *Pentecostal Fangbread* musically runs in a similar vein as the work of those collaborators—that is, if those collaborators were, like... insane. *Zaneil Maharaj*



### ALL NATURAL ELEMENTS: FIRE

Dragon's Breath/US/CD  
On album number four, Chicago's original DIY hip-hop heads, All Natural's Capital D and Tone B. Nimble, return to form, employing a wealth of rugged beats and free-flowing rhymes. The fiery theme comes through nicely here, with head-nod-evoking anthems like "The All" and "Somethin of Nothin" carrying the incendiary energy of classic M.O.P. tracks, minus the blatant thug appeal. Yet the duo and its producers (Kev Brown, Battletek. et al.) don't beat listeners over the head with the same boom-bap formula. On the dub-leaning "Signature Flow" in particular, Cap D shows that he can deliver his famous battle rap heat without getting overly heated. Essential for purists, and highly recommended for everyone else. *Max Herman*



### ALLÁ ES TIEMPO

Crammed/BEL/CD  
The three musicians behind Allá may be based in Chicago, but the most distinct geographical influence on their debut album comes from afar: Brazil. Though brothers Jorge and Angel Ledezma and Lupe Martinez are of Mexican heritage, and sing in Spanish rather than Portuguese, their lush, tropical pop, with its gorgeous strings and warm vocals, owes much to the influential (if short-lived) tropicalia movement. races of dub, downtempo, and even psychedelia emerge throughout, and the album sounds summery and light (there's little bass to anchor the 12 tracks here). *Es Tiempo* might sound a little too similar to its worldly origins, but it's enjoyable nonetheless. *Luciana Lopez*

### ELLEN ALLIEN SOOL

BPitch/GER/CD  
Over the course of five albums, Ellen Allien has gone to great lengths to test minimal techno's constraints. However, with her sixth album, *Sool*, Allien has taken an opposite route by relishing the genre limitations she once fought against. Produced with fellow Berlinette AGF, *Sool* takes the word "minimal" literally: tracks like "Einsteigen" and "Caress" are almost *too* delicate and airy to be considered songs. As such, much of the album comes off like an endless intro; the sounds never provide techno's all-too-familiar foundation. While that can make for a bold scramble of expectations, ultimately, *Sool* comes off more like a mission statement than an engrossing listen. *Brandon Ivers*

### ANTONELLI SOULKILLER

Italic/GER/CD  
Stefan Schwander (a.k.a. Antonelli) clearly gets the point of minimalist art—whether it's music or visuals or macaroni necklaces, he makes the most emotional impact with the slightest disturbance. On *Soulkiller*, his sixth album, Schwander layers analog drum machines, synthesizers, and sequences for tracks that get across his sense of whimsy and fun with cheerful beats and buoyancy. House and techno mix with funk on dancefloor-friendly tracks that ebb and flow endlessly. Schwander recorded these tracks live to tape, which adds to the apparent simplicity. Unfortunately, the emotional range here is narrow; from track to track, there are few peaks or valleys. "Minimal" shouldn't also have to mean "limited." *Luciana Lopez*

### DOUGLAS ARMOUR THE LIGHTS OF A GOLDEN DAY, THE ARMS OF THE NIGHT

The Social Registry/US/CD  
If you like to strain for satisfaction, Douglas Armour might be the dude for you. His sweet but barely audible voice has a hard time rising above the house music of "Trembling, on the Verge" or "Towards the Light." His descending melodies in "Not An(Other) Love Song" are ambitious, but they lack the volume to stick in your chest. Even when his programmed dance music steps aside for his vocals, as on the winsome closer, "The Mystery It Never Lasts," Armour keeps it too hushed to sway you. And that's what dance music is supposed to do. An able debut, but one hopes his sophomore effort doesn't slump as noticeably. *Scott Thill*

### BENGA DIARY OF AN AFRO WARRIOR

Tempa/UK/CD  
Dubstep has forever chased the island sound. From the "dub" in its name to the endless riffs on classic Jamaican tunes, dubstep expresses the piece of the British heart that has always tended toward reggae. Benga, however, explicitly seeks to incorporate electro into this sound, and by extension its particular black-futurist ideas. And that fusion makes this album totally awesome, from the vocoder-laden vocals on "Go Tell Them" to the jerky synths and handclaps of "Crunked Up." The scene's second true breakout hit, "Night," sounds great as always, but ultimately it's slinky and genuinely weird tunes like "26 Basslines" that make the album a real accomplishment. Fearless experimentation pays off. *Matt Earp*

### BOOKA SHADE THE SUN AND THE NEON LIGHT

Get Physical/GER/CD  
It's almost too perfect that Berlin's Booka Shade included a track called "Comacabana" on this latest outing—you could just as easily doze off to these jams as freak out. The album's split personality has everything to do with the overall sound, which wraps every wash and click into a pleasant, straight-lined cleanliness. But rather than come off as overtly sterile, tracks like "Duke" don't so much flaunt obsessive details as bask in thoughtful, warm craftsmanship. Unfortunately, the flipside to that approach is that sometimes *The Sun* verges into coffee-table territory, asserting a level of refinement that seems at odds with the (supposed) goal. *Brandon Ivers*

### CARRIE 1981

Static Discos/US/CD  
On her debut, *Honey Blue Star*, Mexico City's Carrie was just one of many contemporary artists as taken with the *idea* of being an electronic-music singer-songwriter as with the actual task at hand: writing good songs and painting them with a seamless combination of strummed and digital sounds. While *1981* doesn't solve the problem—Carrie is still self-aware in the studio—it comes damn close. Songs like the title track, with its incessant beat, and "Pollock," with its lack thereof, prove her willingness to explore. But it's on "Stumble" that Carrie fulfills her potential: A tick-tock beat and sustained synth awash in Carrie's Cocteau Twins-esque vocal reverb and Ben Watt-style songwriting comprise the singer's best effort yet. *Justin Hopper*

### DJ DOLORES 1 REAL

Crammed/BEL/CD  
Since the late '80s, Helder Aragão (a.k.a. DJ Dolores) has attempted to "go beyond samba and bossa nova," his press info claims. Collaborating with fellow Recife, Brazil natives Nação Zumbi, he took a detour through graphic design, soundtracks, and TV production work, all of which now inform his colorful beat-driven mutations of Brazilian music. The man slices English vocals from language tapes the way Manu Chao blows whistles. Between the spaces of his drum & bass- and big-beat-informed compositions he sequences tasteful brass, accordions, and congas. He's never left the Zumbi state of mind; he's merely expanded it beyond belief. *Derek Beres*

### DOSH WOLVES AND WISHES

Anticon/US/CD  
Martin Luther King Chavez Dosh (his real name) has mastered the art of hyperactive layering through a series of cerebral and catchy experimental-beat records, starting with his self-titled debut and continuing here, where his dense, twitchy sound keeps its momentum without succumbing to entropy. The jittery beats and guitar on "If You Want to, You Have to" seem like they last forever, but the song retains its urgency throughout. The breakbeat xylophones and metal solos of "Don't Wait For the Needle to Drop" are so precise they dissolve into ambient chillage in about three minutes. Even hushed orchestral interludes like "First Impossible" metamorphose into clockwork rhythms that will have you staring into space and saying, "My God, it's full of stars." *Scott Thill*

### ELEPHANT MAN LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Bad Boy-VP/US/CD  
Breakneck tempos, furiously party-oriented lyrics, humorous asides, catchy choruses, and a star-studded guest list (Chris Brown, Wyclef, Swizz Beats, Rhianna, Shaggy) mark the Energy God's return. As usual, Ele concentrates on sex, dancing, and keeping the vibes sky-high. In his oversized hands, dancehall music is treated with church-like reverence; his calls to action have all the authority of a pastor's sermon. The intensity could easily inspire holy roller-like convulsions, most notably on "Jump," a crunk-ragga-hop tune with all the impact of a thermonuclear jackhammer. As its title suggests, *Let's Get Physical* isn't an especially cerebral album, but if you have to think too hard about shakin' your moneymaker to this, yuh nah ready yet. *Eric K. Arnold*

### EXPERIMENTAL DENTAL SCHOOL JANE DOE LOVES ME

Cochon/US/CD  
One can only wonder what's in Oakland's water system. But whatever it is, Deerhoof, Da Hawnay Troof, and Experimental Dental School are all guzzling the same stuff, and it's twisting their musical minds in similarly demented ways. Experimental Dental School is an exercise in fractured discord, with a spectacularly blatant disregard for tempo or melody. The band is beholden to no musical convention, abusing their guitars, organs, and drum kits into a sound that veers between noise-, math-, and art rock. As their name implies, experimentalism rules supreme, with ragged chord progressions and clamorous drum sequences reining themselves in just as they begin to blow minds—and thankfully before they blow eardrums. *Connie Hwang*

### GIANT PANDA ELECTRIC LASER

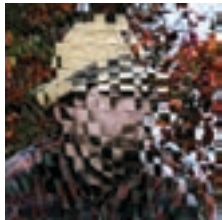
Tres/US/CD  
L.A.'s true-school trio brings the bionic boom-bap on its sophomore effort, *Electric Laser*. As the title suggests, they add a slightly electro, synth-heavy touch to their sound. But don't be fooled—this isn't some cheesy wannabe-'80s pop/nu-hip-house gimmick shit. Though not as traditional as its 2005 debut, *Fly School Reunion*, the group manages to maintain the true vibe while pushing the sound forward. Drums still dominate, especially on the aptly named "Speakers Pop." But there's no escaping the futuristic funk of *Electric Laser*—not that you'd want to. Giant Panda's range in production and style—from serious ("AIM," "Pops") to funny ("Do the Robot In Cyberspace")—is more than welcome. Now you can stop comparing them to P.U.T.S. *Zaneil Maharaj*

### ISLANDS ARM'S WAY

Anti/US/CD  
Since his days fronting weird-pop kings Unicorns, Nick Thorburn (formerly Nicolas Diamonds) has shown a knack for unpredictable melodies and antisocial behavior. *Arm's Way*, the second record from his Islands project, comes a full two years after the well-received *Return to the Sea*, and evolves Thorburn's songwriting further. Louder and much fuller, the symphonic rock epics on *Arm's Way* benefit from bigger production and vast ideas. Opener "The Arm" is all orchestral bliss rock, while "J'aime Vous Voir Quitter" transforms its violent first half to a *Graceland*-themed finish. Strengthened by more focused songwriting and heavy arrangements, *Arm's Way* is arguably the most satisfying record Thorburn has created. *Josiah Hughes*

### JAMES PANTS WELCOME

Stones Throw/US/CD  
Spokane-based beat-nerd James Pants first met Stones Throw boss Peanut Butter Wolf in 2001, but it's taken until now to finally compile *Welcome*, his debut long-player. From the bedroom production to the thrift-store synths and genre-hopping between '80s hip-hop, soul, and post-punk, *Welcome* is a brilliant, though scatterbrained work. "Theme From Paris" blows the record wide open with some sprawling synths and splashy cymbals that are followed by the uptight funk of "Dragonslayer." As the record continues, it passes through its share of vocoders, party-starting anthems, and Moog jazz. Clearly comfortable with any genre, James Pants is a welcome addition to Stones Throw's gang of oddballs. *Josiah Hughes*



### J-LIVE THEN WHAT HAPPENED?

BBE/UK/CD  
Call J-Live stubborn, but this NYC native isn't one to conform to hip-hop's movements of the moment. Aside from an awkwardly attempted club track ("The Zone"), the MC/DJ/producer's new album sticks to his longtime true-school spirit. And his persistence amounts to mostly palatable results. The xylophone-tinged "It Don't Stop" is a prime example of how J's love of hip-hop culture over wealth has only grown stronger via lines like, "Even as an amateur/I shall proceed to add to the cipher/Drop a trail of jewels/That lead to a time where conscious is cool." It doesn't matter if he's rapping about perseverance or getting personal about his broken marriage—J-Live remains a voice that deserves to be heard. *Max Herman*



Photo: Dara Ma

### FOALS ANTIDOTES

Sub Pop/US/CD  
Although Foals principles Yannis Philippakis and Jack Bevan quit their original math-rock outfit The Edmund Fitzgerald because they wanted to lighten up a bit, listeners are still going to need to know a few algorithms to get the post-punk funk of *Antidotes*. (A background in Wire, Depistado, Talking Heads, and Sweep the Leg Johnny might come in handy as well.) But even neophytes are probably going to fall for the pogo-skank of "Cassius" or the deconstructed ska of "The French Open." The only major question is whether they're going to have enough juice for the entire effort. Foals rarely let up: Even the cerebral harmonics of "Olympic Airways" or the angular moans of "Heavy Water" feel like heart attacks wrapped in synths and silk. But in these days of Pro Tools and MySpace slack jobs, it's a beautiful thing to watch such rich riffage go for broke. *Scott Thill*



**THE HERBALISER**  
**SAME AS IT NEVER WAS**  
 !K7/GER/CD

Hopscotching across downtempo and hip-hop to jazz and soul, The Herbaliser has stayed fresh. But Jake Wherry and Ollie Teeba have gone back to the '60s in this rousing paean, with mixed results but always with masterful grooves. The ever-reliable Jean Grae shows up to spin some patented wake-ups on "Street Karma (A Cautionary Tale)." The newcomers are solid as well: U.K.'s MC Yungun's carbonated flow keeps the bounce of "Just Won't Stop" in a healthy gallop, and Jessica Darling's funky pipes on "On Your Knees" and "You're Not All That" manage to hover somewhere between Sharon Jones and Joss Stone without getting in the way of the grooves. Herbaliser's usual gifts lie in their potent instrumentals, like the revelatory "Same as It Never Was" or the swampy tropicalia of "Amores Bongo." But on a team or on their own, Herbaliser still packs punch. Inhale with confidence. *Scott Thill*



**KID CREOLE**  
**GOING PLACES: THE AUGUST DARNELL YEARS 1974-1983**  
 Strut/UK/CD

Clothed in Cab Calloway garb, NYC chameleon August Darnell mashed together genres like Latin-funk, rumba, Vegas cabaret, and disco as if he'd performed them all his life. *Going Places* captures his best moments in Kid Creole & the Coconuts and his endless array of side-gigs. The winner is Machine's disco classic about white flight, "There but for the Grace of God Go I," but Kid Creole's wiseass funk on "Going Places" and their JB's ode, "Double on Back," are nearly just as infectious. The camp sometimes boils too high; just cover your ears during "I'm an Indian Too," unless Cher's "Half-Breed" hits close to home. *Going Places* is yet another fine tourist brochure for Ed Koch's New York. *Cameron Macdonald*

**LADYTRON**  
**VELOCIFERO**  
 Nettwerk/US/CD

Ladytron's last effort snuck up like a synthetic seduction, but they're closing in on their first decade. Their programming has been mainlined by now, and powerful acts are hard to follow. But *Velocifero* walks the tightrope well, veering between the Gothic pound of "I'm Not Scared," "Black Cat," and "Ghosts" without falling into Halloween-y artifice. The electro-pop soul of "Runaway" manages to shine past its digital and analog housing, and Helen's and Mira's robotic vocals give "Deep Blue" the humanity it needs to evolve into a kick-ass dance tune, as well as being one of strangest odes to a computer ever composed. Yes, the pressure is on, but Ladytron's space-aged hearts have a capable upgrade at the ready. *Scott Thill*

**DOMINIQUE LEONE**  
**DOMINIQUE LEONE**  
 Strömland/NOR/CD

San Francisco-based singer/multi-instrumentalist/producer Dominique Leone bows with a leftfield-pop classic. This self-titled debut sounds as if it were labored over for years, after immersion in the zenith of prog-rock, avant-garde composition, and art-pop mavericks. The 11 songs here abound with unexpected transitions, unusual electronic embellishments, and melodies of unearthly beauty and intrigue. Leone's expressive voice by turns recalls Greg Lake, Adrian Belew, and Brian Wilson, craftily augmenting his shape-shifting, spine-tingling compositions. What Battles has done for math rock, Leone is doing for prog-pop: giving it a kitsch-free futuristic thrust that sets the standard for 21st-century practitioners of the genre. *Dave Segal*

**LULLATONE**  
**PRESENTS THE BEDTIME BEAT**  
 Someone Good/AUS/CD

Originally forming when Louisville, Kentucky-based performer Shawn James Seymour met vocalist Yoshimi Tomida in college, this Japan-based lap-pop team now has six albums full of miniature melodies and wide-eyed wonder. *The Bedtime Beat*, the duo's sixth proper full-length, is a mini-concept album about sleep and dreams. If it sounds a little precious, that's because it is: throughout the record, beats are crafted from snoring ("Your Snore") and splashing bath water ("The Bathtime Beat"), while Yoshimi dreams about Biz Markie ("The Bedtime Beatbox"). At 20 minutes long, however, the quirkiness doesn't annoy, instead emphasizing the kindness in lullabies like "Oyasumi." Brief, comforting, and consistent, *The Bedtime Beat* will find an easy place in your heart. *Josiah Hughes*

**MIDNIGHT JUGGERNAUTS**  
**DYSTOPIA**  
 Astralwerks/US/CD

Having gained wide exposure after opening for Justice last year, Australian trio Midnight Juggernauts releases *Dystopia*, a spotty debut. The record is hard to pin down because of its attempt to incorporate so many genre elements—Pink Floyd psych, Air-like atmospherics, synth-pop, and more—and ultimately flounders because of its lack of cohesion. Some tracks, like the widely blogged-about "Road to Recovery" set rock harmonies atop Justice-y beats; others ape Eno over dancing synths (the disc's standout "Twenty Thousand Leagues"). Still others try for vocal-less atmospherics ("Intro," "Scorpius") that fail. *Dystopia* isn't a bad record—it may very well find an audience of, say, Klaxons fans—but it leaves listeners unsure as to what this band is exactly about. *Joe Colly*

**NO AGE**  
**NOUNS**  
 Sub Pop/US/CD

After whetting appetites with last year's stellar singles collection, *Weirdo Rippers*, L.A. noise-rockers No Age offer their first proper full-length in *Nouns*, an absolute winner of a record. For their switch to indie powerhouse Sub Pop, the band doesn't polish any of its trademark scuzz, and manages to retain all of the punk insistency of its earlier work. *Nouns* also offers plenty of beauty and melody, and what makes the album succeed is the seamlessness with which these elements are folded into the otherwise rough mix. Tracks like the Cramps-y "Teen Creeps" and the brilliant rocker "Sleeper Hold" show off this blend of noise and harmony particularly well. This is the punk record you've been waiting for. *Joe Colly*

**ODD NOSDAM**  
**PRETTY SWELL EXPLODE**  
 Anticon/US/CD

David "Odd Nosedam" Madson's hip-hop-laced productions often resemble a doll whose head has been replaced by a Bratz's and has legs made of Lincoln Logs, and *Pretty Swell Explode* amasses the longtime Anticon producer's remixes, b-sides, and table scraps. "Cut" and "Perfectly Pink Path" are lo-fi shoegaze masterworks, while "Bear Hug" loops sound like undead My Bloody Valentine guitar riffs. Madson reaches his peak in his cover of Black Moth Super Rainbow's "Forever Heavy," where he buries Jessica Bailiff's nectarine-juiced vocals beneath gaseous distortion and red-eyed, hip-hop beats. Not everything clicks, namely his aimless remix of Boards of Canada's "Dayvan Cowboy," but as long as Madson is kept awake by too many ideas, his future looks healthy. *Cameron Macdonald*

**PROLYPHIC & REANIMATOR**  
**THE UGLY TRUTH**  
 Strange Famous/US/CD

2004's slept-on *Music to Slit Wrists By* showed Reanimator's penchant for quality beat-making. This time, the slick producer joins Rhode Island MC Prolyphic for their Strange Famous debut, resulting in songs with vivid lyrics complimented by equally scenic production. Tracks like "Artist Goes Pop," "Box Within a Box," and "Two-Track Mind" showcase the pair's chemistry while illustrating an attention to song structure. Prolyphic's lyrics flow naturally on "Sleeping Dogs Lie" while Reanimator's tension-and-release-filled beats on "On the Side" keep you engaged. The final track, "Playing With Old Flames," is the album's apex, hopefully leaving the door open for more from these two. *David Ma*

**QUIET VILLAGE**  
**SILENT MOVIE**  
 !K7/GER/CD

Joel Martin and Matt Edwards refer to their Quiet Village project as Balearic—the '80s combination of house, pop, disco, and new age-y sounds that spread from Ibiza's early clubbing incarnations. It's the perfect tag since "Balearic" refers distinctly to a feeling rather than a sound, and *Silent Movie* is fat with sensations—"Singing Sand"'s near-tactile wind bells, or the filmic cowboys-and-surfers pow-wow on "Gold Rush." Yet it's thin on preconceived musical genres. Tempered by the crate-digger's paradise of exotica and "cocktail disco" samples, but set within a downtempo rhythmic framework, tracks like "Too High to Move" and "Pacific Rhythm" will fill the dancefloor, even if people aren't quite sure what to do once there. *Justin Hopper*

**ROBYN**  
**ROBYN**  
 Cherrytree-Interscope/US/CD

Three years after its initial release in Sweden and nearly two years after blowing up in the U.K., Robyn's self-titled album finally arrives Stateside, on a Perez Hilton-led wave of hype that shouldn't distract anyone from how astonishingly good it is. Much of the attention has focused on the hilarious, Peaches-lite rapping of "Konichiwa Bitches," but the best moments on *Robyn* combine sleek, 21st-century beats (courtesy of Teddybears' Klas Åhlund and The Knife) with terrific, bubbly pop songs. "Bum Like You" and "Who's That Girl?" prove that Robyn, who started out as a teen diva apprenticed to future Britney hit-maker Max Martin, can craft hooks as sharp as anything Madonna or Justin Timberlake ever put forth. *Andy Hermann*

**SALLY SHAPIRO**  
**REMIX ROMANCE VOL 1 & 2**  
 Paperbag/CAN/CD

On *Disco Romance*, Johan Ageborn and the pseudonymic Sally Shapiro forged a synthesis of Italo-disco, twee pop, and Scandinavian electro so close to flawless that they it have been a Frankenstein creation of St. Etienne mastermind Bob Stanley. That Shapiro has never performed live or revealed her actual name enhanced this ideal. *Disco Romance* seemed ripe for a remix. But, while often very lovely, this dual-volume remodeling (one CD, one download) featuring remixes from Junior Boys, The Juan MacLean, Dntel, and Lindström isn't quite on the money. Somehow, the attempt at attaining a new level of perfection disrupts the equilibrium of Shapiro and Ageborn's originals, making them paradoxically slightly further away from such a state. *David Hemingway*

**STEINSKI**  
**WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAN? 1983-2006 RETROSPECTIVE**  
 Illegal Art/US/CD

About 25 years ago, ad men Steve "Steinski" Stein and Douglas "Double Dee" DiFranco crammed two dozen records into "The Payoff Mix," a hip-hop classic that folks are still mining breaks from. This long-overdue retrospective, *What Does It All Mean?*, shows that Stein never lost his game. Among the essentials are the "Lesson" mixes (pitch-perfect snatches of old-school rap, funk, and cartoon wisecracks) and Stein's controversial hip-hop piece on the JFK assassination, "The Motorcade Sped On," alongside a clever anti-Gulf War protest, "It's Up to You." As well, the lesser-known "Vox Apostolica" and "Everything's Disappeared" are great, scratched-up examples of hip-hop gone mental. Grab this and get schooled by the master. *Cameron Macdonald*

**THE GROUCH**  
**SHOW YOU THE WORLD**  
 Legendary Music/US/CD

Meticulously crafted, *Show You the World* is The Grouch's first solo release in five years, serving food for thought over a platter of tight production. Though "Clones" deals in trite topical matter, its medley of congas, horns, strings, and keys will put a twist in your hip. The same goes for the funky "Hot Air Balloons." Sticking to his simple-man mantra, he attacks corporate chains on "Mom and Pop Killer" and pretentious pseudo-elitists on "Artsy," rapping, "You ain't artsier than me/cause you got sideburns and a vintage tee." However, his and Murs' post-hyphy construction "The Bay to L.A." comes a little too late. If you thought the Legends were slipping, *Show You the World* will fix your screwface. *Zoneil Maharaj*

**THE LINES**  
**MEMORY SPAN**  
 Acute/US/CD

From 1978 to 1982, British post-punk also-rans The Lines made records brimming with the early-'80s success checklist: vaguely fey vocals, passable guitar skills, eccentric lyrics, and titles referencing the social upheaval of Thatcher's Britain. What The Lines lacked was any interest in the music biz—they never toured, and practically insisted on failing to capitalize on any successes. Musically, however, the handful of records The Lines made, all collected here on CD for the first time, provide the missing link between U.K. and U.S. post-punk. Listening to the brilliant "Nerve Pylon" and "Two Split Seconds," it's impossible not to hear the DNA of the Athens scene, and indeed all of 1980s American college radio. *Justin Hopper*

**THE NOTWIST**  
**THE DEVIL, YOU + ME**  
 Domino/US/CD

It's been a while—six years, actually—since we last heard from Germany's The Notwist. Thankfully, *The Devil, You + Me* proves our patient wait for more of the band's high-brow electro-pop hasn't been for naught. It's a subtler affair than 2002's brilliant *Neon*

*Golden*—it's got less bounce, less perk. But there's more to listen for—like the nervous strings flitting in and out of "Where in This World," or the tremulous synths glowing under "Gloomy Planets," or the feedback tearing through "Your Alphabet." It's an intensity that burns so softly you might miss its heat. But in this instance, it pays to listen to the devil. *John S.W. MacDonald*

**WALTER MEEGO**  
**VOYAGER**  
 Almost Gold/US/CD

Load Walter Meego's *Voyager* into iTunes and the genre that appears is simply "pop." And despite the fact that the Chicago duo's material is built around a dance format, this is a truly apt description. On their debut, the band looks to spit-shine the work of current favorites Hot Chip and Cut Copy using a much-too-sugary formula behind singer Justin Sconza's whiny vocals. Meego has also clearly spent considerable time with Air's *Moon Safari*—tracks like "More Than I Can Say" and "Tomorrowland" copy almost exactly that record's lounge crooning and spaceship-engine whirs. While their aesthetic at times borders on obnoxious, *Voyager's* production is black-toast crisp and its songs retain an almost Beatles-like dedication to melodic precision. *Joe Colly*



**THE ORB**  
**THE DREAM**  
 Six Degrees/US/CD

If *Okie Dokie It's the Orb on Kompakt* was entirely colored by Thomas Fehlmann's cool aura, *The Dream* is warm and prismatic under the direction of mad wizard Alex Paterson. The former album, its soft techno synchronized to the '00s, introduced a new generation to the ambient-experimental legends. This one could drive those folks away, or better, into the vaults for classic Primal Scream and FSOL. The nostalgic *Dream* works best as a companion to 1992's *UFOrb*, down to that album's "Blue Room" sharing a sample with new track "The Truth Is..." It's a hallucination of snipped radio transmissions, oceanic textures, and soulful vocals. Desi beats and plenty of dub brush up next to a track anchored with a pan-flute—the mix gets weirder and better with every listen. Cheers to a vision creatively executed without regard to trends. *Rachel Shimp*



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# Comp Reviews 6.08

## Jesse Rose



**FROM GLITCHY SAMPLES TO QUIRKY BASSLINES, JESSE ROSE'S MADE TO PLAY LABEL LETS LOOSE WITH ITS FIRST COMPILATION.**

**PLAYING AROUND**  
Made to Play/UK/2CD

Where is the heart of house these days? Is it the drum, as many an overused sample (or any drummer) will tell you? Is it the melody, carried by a voice, a sample, or a synth? London's Jesse Rose would likely answer that it is instead the pulse of the bass, the bump that has carried dance music from Detroit techno to German minimalism to today's pan-global house hybrids, if the steady, propulsive basslines that pervade most of *Playing Around* are any indication.

Rose's Made to Play label is only a dozen vinyl releases old, but its tracks have found homes in DJ crates far and wide, not least of all Rose's own as an ascendant festival DJ and remixer, and all have exemplified the "fidget house" tag. Originally coined as a joke between Rose and Dave Taylor (a.k.a. Switch), "fidget house" describes this music perfectly: choppy, herky-jerky vocal samples and goofy left turns into sound effects and breakdowns, all smoothed out with consistent, thunderous bass for the bins. While the label's strictly limited 12-inches are a secretive DJ's dream, it means the home listener has been left in the dark regarding the buzz around this label and the fidget house style.

*Playing Around* rectifies that with a disc of 13 tracks, hand-harvested and assembled by Rose from Made to Play's vinyl releases, and a second disc continuously mixed (from largely the same selections) by the label's rising star Oliver \$. The glitch/micro-sample bag of tricks rarely empties for the label's more inventive producers as they use spoken bits, alien noises, or reconfigured musical snippets to layer over the strictly 4/4 beats (choppy and funky as they may be). Lzit's "Heavy What" appears in two almost unrecognizable versions: "Our Version" relies on a killer gnarled bass hook, while "Honky Version" grafts on cut-and-paste banjos and harmonizing cowboys, weaving into

Herbert-esque territory. This is where *Playing Around* reveals the strengths and limitations of fidget house: On headphones, seven minutes of a single beat and even the lushest bassline can wear thin, but the consistently inventive samples and surprisingly placed breakdowns keep the momentum going at all times, and a sense of humor lifts the best tracks into the transcendent, the cheesy, or a cheesy transcendence, recalling the shameless mix of tough and vulnerable that characterized its jacking Chicago house predecessors. As well, fixations with old hip-hop and even drum & bass crop up at unpredictable times (Buckley's "Block Party" steals a goofy skit from Digital Underground's ancient "Doowutchyalike") to keep the well from running dry.

The downside of fidget house is that much of it relies on midtempo beats with glitchy variations and unexpected samples; when those touches are lacking and a track turns toward the minimal, it can get cold and dull. Oddly it's the Jesse Rose and Oliver \$ collaboration, "Wake Up," smack in the middle of the Rose's selections disc, that suffers the worst, throwing off a blasé vibe (even stranger, it works fine early in the slow build of Oliver's mixed set). But one track later Rose and Sinden's "Me Mobile" perks things up again with a fizzy bassline and a sprightly swing. It's hard to say exactly why house needed another tag to further splice the current state of the genre, but somehow it fits: Somewhere in the middle of a triangle formed by minimal/experimental house, traditional Chicago jack, and treble-heavy hard-rock house à la Justice sits the Made to Play crew, playing around with processed vox in their hands and traditional bass in their hearts. *Rob Geary*

### BLACK STARS: GHANA'S HIPLIFE GENERATION

Out Here/GER/CD

To hip you to music set to explode onto the international stage, *favela*-funk style, *Black Stars* does your legwork for ya: Copious and detailed liner notes accompany this disc bursting with the fresh sound and catalyzing energy of hiplife, Ghana's mesh of hip-hop, reggae, and R&B with highlife, West Africa's long-standing pop style. Artists such as Tic Tac, on his mega-hit "Kangaroo," meld trebly highlife guitars and a tough dancehall beat with English lyrics, while songs like V.I.P.'s "Ahomka Wo Mu," a similarly massive hit, are almost entirely in the *Twi* language, backed by African rhythms. As informative as it is infectious and club-ready, *Black Stars* is certainly one of the best of 2008. *Justin Hopper*

### CAROLINA FUNK: FIRST IN FUNK

Jazzman/US/CD

From the folks that brought you *Midwest, Texas*, and *Florida Funk*, *Carolina Funk* offers up even more lost gems. This time, the obscure recordings have been scoured from the southeast, featuring unknowns like The Ultimates, The Black Exotics, and Wally Coco. The 22-tracker is a vibrant, sweat-drenched listen from start to finish. Roy Roberts' "You Ain't Miss It" and Frankie and The Damons' "Bad Woman" are spirited, upbeat recordings that would make James Brown proud. The release comes packed with a full-color booklet explaining the tattered history behind the music and its makers. The sound quality is superb, the energy is through the roof, and the artists are all heart. This right here is real funk. *David Ma*

### DJ YODA: FABRICLIVE 39

Fabric/UK/CD

Shoving opposites like Ice Cube, Minnie Riperton, Violent Femmes, and Bell Biv Devoe into the same room spells out potential carnage. Yet, London's DJ Yoda makes peace and he even warms the heart. Early on, Yoda scratches up the *dum-dum, dum-dum* beats on the Femmes' "Blister in the Sun" and later runs through a keen, circa-1991 junior-high dance mix of BBD, Run DMC, and Salt-n-Pepa. There's also a marching-band rendition of "Sexual Healing" and a sharp grime/dubstep clash courtesy of Wiley and Skream. But the charmer is the sing-along finale of Lord Kitchener's classic calypso ode to West Indian immigrants, "London Is the Place for Me." *Cameron Macdonald*

### ROBERT HOOD: FABRIC 39

Fabric/UK/CD

Few are better qualified to provide an overview of minimal techno's parabolas and permutations than Robert Hood. Along with former Underground Resistance band-mate Jeff Mills, Hood's been helping to define and shape vanguard dance music for nearly two decades. *Fabric 39* finds this Detroit-raised producer/DJ working 32 tracks into 69 minutes, sifting through the deluge of mmm releases to reveal the hardest, most glinting gems, including (appropriately) several of his own creations. Cutthroat cuts from Pacou, Mills, Joris Voon, Diego, John Thomas, and others typify Hood's mix with their urgent, clattering pummel, generating subtly momentous fluctuations while rarely deviating from the soulfully stoic vibe. Listen, learn, and move to Hood's master seminar. *Dave Segal*

### MUTING THE NOISE

Innervisions/GER/CD

Innervisions' inaugural CD release is probably not what you'd expect if you've already been seduced by previous 12-inches from the likes of Atjazz, Chateau Flight, and Stefan Goldman, or imprint boss Dixon's awesome contribution to Get Physical's *Body Language* series. Apparently inspired by Brian Eno's similarly disposed recordings (and by a visit to Japan), *Muting the Noise* is an attempt to renew the credence of "ambient" music via contributions from the likes of Henrik Schwarz and Tokyo Black Star. Most successful—that is, most *lovely*—are tracks from Karma and Âme, that recall no one so much as early-'90s atmosphericists Insides. Exquisite. *David Hemingway*

### MY FAVORITE THINGS

Mule Electronic/JPN/CD

On a sub-label of Tokyo's Mule Musiq, but embodying a very European aesthetic, *My Favorite Things*—which offers tracks by Adolf Noise (a.k.a. DJ Koze), Lawrence, Tony Lionni, Minilogue, Loco Dice, and more—begs the question *du jour*, "What is minimal?" In the strictest sense, minimal is arrangements without distractions, free of stray tones, and that is not always the case here. Some of these 11 heavily atmospheric cuts—most previously unreleased, or at least unreleased on CD—favor tribal underpinnings, while others are streaked with spectral imaging. These tracks teem with micro detailing. *Tony Ware*

### NIGERIA ROCK SPECIAL: PSYCHEDELIC AFRO-ROCK & FUZZ FUNK IN 1970S NIGERIA

Soundway/UK/CD

Mixing their regional roots with European and American prog-rock influences, the bands that comprise this collection of funk-fused psych-rock gems didn't follow the popular Afrobeat style pioneered by Nigeria's Fela Kuti. Instead, fuzzed-out guitars and lyrics of multiple languages dominate these 15 spacey rhythms. Highlights include The Action 13's funk anthem "More Bread to the People" and The Hygrades' "In the Jungle," a searing instrumental that conjures up visions of Hendrix. Along with these tracks, the 20-page, history-rich booklet provides quite an incentive to get to African for some serious crate-digging—or at least to the laptop for some extensive Googling. *Zoneil Maharaj*

### WIGNOMY BROTHERS: METAWUFFMISCHFELGE

Freude am Tanzen/GER/CD

If the devil's in the details, then this is a hell of a mix. Brother Robag Wruhme has certainly taken a devil-may-care approach, personalizing an exercise in minimal house isometrics. Shuffling funk and reverberant chords slowly coalesce with blissed-out snippets and vocal hiccupps. Compiled from nearly 30 components (including tracks by Lisa Gerrard, False, and Trentemøller, plus Wruhme's undisclosed "samples"), this could have been a steamroller or, in less talented hands, a train wreck. The end result makes for such a seamless afterhours stream, however, that it's more appropriate to apply Le Corbusier's counterargument that "God is in the details." This mosaic is so well orchestrated, so precise in its built-up comedowns, it's as pious as it is pliant. *Tony Ware*



## Raudive

### DIAMANTEN UND RAKETEN II

Klang Elektronik/GER/CD

A few downtempo throwaways aside, Klang's second installment of their "diamonds and rockets" series delivers made-for-mixing tracks that techno headz likely already own on 12". Klang fans won't be surprised that minimalism rules: Dan Curtin's bouncy classic "Synaptic" plucks only the barest notes to skip and flutter against his walloping bassline, while Bored & Lazy's "The Expert" uses scratchy, corrugated synthesizers to grind through techno beats like a buzz saw. "Red on Black" finds Oliver Ho masquerading under his Raudive moniker, revisiting the lush trance and tribal flavors that he was once known for. Carl Finlow and D'Juz throw down *Diamanten's* standout cut with their dark shuffle "Brain Hoover," an electrifying exercise in lean, stripped-down minimal funk which will have your fingers itching to mix this murky bass into just about anything. Too bad this comp didn't come mixed—a flaw, however, that ye deck swabbers can easily fix. *Janet Tzou*





**Broken Business**  
By Peter Nicholson  
FUTURE JAZZ AND BUSTED BEATS



Flying Lotus



Sarah Linares photo Guillaume Simonneau



Scott

Gonna kick things off this month with another installment from my private purveyor of perversely precious music, Secret Agent J. In between promoting parties packed with promising talent, J managed to FT, uh, P me some of his latest and greatest and I'll now pass along the favor. Promptly.

On the unauthorized-edit tip is super-frisky version of James Brown's "Ain't It Funky Now" by secretive South Bay cat **Yosaku**. Drums are naturally kept front and center, the organ gets turned up high, and the horns are out-of-sight tight. At a crisp 120 bpm, it goes well with another inspired pairing, **DJ Spinna** and **Jeremy Ellis**. Ellis' "Bounce" is the tune, Spinna's on remix duties, and it's on a highly seductive, swirly house tip with dainty pointillist keyboard work playing off funkier, pitch-bent stabs. Haven't heard the dirt on the last live performance by **John Jeremy** (Ellis and **John Arnold**) but I'm sure it was stimulating—rumor has it there's an album in the works to be called *The Hedgehog*. Also keeping things uptempo is an upcoming selection from a guy known to consort with those wacky John Jeremy types, none other than **John Beltran**. "Your Love" is splendidly sunny, with sing-along lyrics that are hard to forget (even my addled brain can handle "la-la, la-la-la-la-lalala") and swinging handclaps on the two and four beneath bright brass and piano. The **Anto Vitale Shabu Music** mix is wild and dramatic, with syrupy guitars soaring up from a bed of electronic squiggles and swirls, all arranged with aplomb by the Italian producer. Both of those cuts come courtesy of Groovia Records, to give credit where it's due.

So far most of this month's offerings have been on the fast and four-on-the-floor end of the spectrum, so now I'll slam it all the way to the other end with the glitch-jazz-hop of **Flying Lotus**. Since he's got an album coming on Warp, you can find the MP3s on bleep.com—my favorite is the blasted, lurching breakbeat of "Roberta Flack," with its appropriately heavenly singing, chugging percussion, and android oboe. Crunchy!

Also on the harder electronic side of things, but with a much more bruk feel, are **Jan Bauer** and **Daniel Brandt**, who together form **Scott**. Their debut EP is on BPSS, and "No Matter" is a smash, with **Jerry**'s soulful falsetto getting freaky all over a mix of electric and synth bass, frenetic handclaps, and rough string pads. The pair turns to Bristol's **Bubbz** for two other tracks, with "The Beat" working well as Bubbz's vocals get chopped just right.

Quality alert! The Sick Trumpet label always brings the best and their latest, "All Night" by **Art Bleek**, is no exception, featuring production that really is a cut above most tracks. With super vocals from a host of voices, a bassline that wriggles all over the place, and shuffling snares, this one demands that you strut your stuff.

I've saved the best for last, and now it's time for "Pura Vida" by **Soltribe** and **Sarah Linares** on Public Transit Recordings. **Fred Everything** does a stellar job with the house remixes, but man, it's just impossible to top the original. This is a digital-only release, but make sure you track it down in all its 320kbps glory—anything less will not do justice to the percolating polyrhythms, rich live instrumentation (including the rarest of rare—a well-done but not over-mixed *cuica*), and the thickest broken beat I've heard in ages. Seek out and it shall destroy!



**En Tu Casa**  
By Nick Chacona  
HOUSEKEEPING: FROM TECH AND MINIMAL TO DEEP AND TRADITIONAL



Geche



Cynyce and DJ Elyte



Astrid Suryanto

As a Bronx-born New Yorker, it's not really in my blood to say that Boston is representin' in any way, but considering the magnitude of the first releases from the new Airdrop imprint, it looks like they're in the midst of a real (tea) party. Both releases come from **Soul Clap**, the duo of **Cynyce** and **DJ Elyte**. The label's inaugural release, "The Giraffe," is a limited-edition colored-vinyl 10" that features a mix from **Franco Cinelli** that's straight out of Lee Curtiss' twisted tech-house playbook. The second single, "Die Ente," also keeps things on the deep-tech tip initially, then launches into some serious early '90s-style synth-sax house business that could fit easily into **Luciano**'s and **Quentin Harris**' sets. Boston's hero of the moment, dirtybird's **Tanner Ross**, is enlisted here on mix duties, and utilizes some highly reverbed crystalline synth tones and thunderous bass growls to full modern-rave effect.

**John "Jellybean" Benitez**'s namesake label is back again with an updated version of the 1995 classic "Revenge" by **Darryl D'Bonneau**. Production duties are handled by **Scott Wozniak**, who delivers a rather typical string-stab rendition in four versions—club, dub, groovy mix, and bonus beats. Not necessarily the most exciting, but Scott's production prowess shines through on the mix, guaranteeing that this will be an effective weapon on a proper system. Jellybean has also recently begun distributing **Ruben Mancias**' Devotion imprint with a new release on the way—a collaboration between Mancias himself and **Wumni** entitled "Let the Rain (Ko Ma Ro)." Mancias has a hand in each of the four mixes but **George Mena**, another Jellybean fave, teams up on the club mix.

Parisian electro-house label Institutbes just dropped its third release from rock-dance hustler **Surkin** (a.k.a. **Benoit Heitz**). Surkin's pair of 2006 records tore the roof off the PBR-Vuarnet-tight-jeans club scene, so Heitz has been busy in the remix department, rinsing the likes of **Chromeo**,

**VHS or Beta**, **Boys Noize**, and **The Klaxons** to name a few. *Next of Kin* is three jamming tracks of new-school dance music, with a fierce house chop-up from speed-garage god **Todd Edwards** from New Jersey's i! Records. Incidentally, both Surkin and Edwards have remixes on the latest **Justice** single, "Dvno," on the mighty Ed Banger Records.

Brooklyn-based Statra Recordings will be waking from hibernation in the coming months, beginning with an emotive mid-tempo single, "Haunting the Hunter," from **Astrid Suryanto**. Enlisted on the mix are Statra regulars **Geche**, **Charles Webster** (whose Italo take on the tune is nothing short of phenomenal), and also Deep Space's **Brendon Moeller** (a.k.a. **Beat Pharmacy**).

One release that's been out for a minute that recently caught my ear is Z Records man **Dave "Joey Negro" Lee**'s storming piano version of former **Moloko** singer **Róisín Murphy**'s "Let Me Know." Lee takes cues straight from the Leroy Burgess/Patrick Adams school (as he often does) with plenty of cowbell, Moog-style bass, and uplifting piano riffs.

Freerange Records continues its unstoppable march into house music's future, having recently surpassed the 100-release mark. Forthcoming is a stellar deep-tech workout by German expat **Lars Behrenroth** entitled *Ice on the Sun*, which consists of the title track, a remix by the production team **Version** (Charles Webster and **Atjazz**) in their typical top-shelf style, and the vocal tune, "Feel the Sunshine," which focuses on an ultra-dry production technique to really let the rhythms do the talking. Freerange has also recently dropped *Orange*, the latest in their "rainbow" series of compilations. If you are a fan of the old guard of the Freerange stable (**Manuel Tur** and **Milton Jackson**) or looking for some newcomers with similar stylings (such as **Nitzan & Lasimo** or **Compuphonic**) then this is a must-cop.



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### FABRICLIVE39 DJ Yoda Out Now

On FABRICLIVE 39, DJ Yoda manages to effortlessly bring everything and anything into the mix: from the most unpredictable to the stone cold classics. Yoda provides a fusion of old meets new, pulling together beats, bass and sounds from streets around the world – from London to Brazil to Jamaica to Baltimore. With New Jack Swing giving Baltimore house a twirl, Minnie Ripperton grabbing drum'n'bass by the hand, Salt N Pepa getting down with Baile Funk and dubstep grinding up next to Lord Kitchener, DJ Yoda brings it all together for some straight up fun times.



### fabric40 Mark Farina Released: 06.10.08

Mark Farina, one of the most important figures in the development of house music, steps up to the decks for fabric 40, a buoyant, essential soundtrack for summer that swells and melds with the jackin' sounds of Derrick Carter, JT Donaldson & Uneaq, DJ Sneak and King Kooba.

TOUR DATES:  
JUNE 13th White Party (Ruby Skye) San Francisco  
JULY 3rd Tentation Orange County  
JULY 4th Giant San Diego  
JULY 5th Vanguard LA



### FABRICLIVE40 Noisia Released: 07.08.08

Dutch drum'n'bass trio Noisia push us willingly into the deep science of shadowy future tek jungle and breaks with FABRICLIVE 40, a relentless and complex collection of upfront dark beats. Featuring many Noisia tracks from their own two imprints Vision and Division Recordings, as well as labels Ninja Tune, Quarantine and Virus, this mix is a serious throttle to the senses, commanding all to stand to attention at the Amen as moody soundscapes encase the ears and get the dancefloor ready to strike!

Forthcoming in the series: Luciano, Simian Mobile Disco, Åme.



caroline

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REVIEWS COLUMNS



### After Silence By Martin De Leon

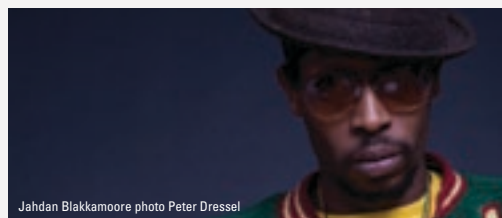
THE OUTER ORBITS OF ELECTRONIC MUSIC



Mochipet



These Are Powers



Jahdan Blakkamoore photo Peter Dressel

Like the Popemobile or booty shorts, sound art exists for a chosen few. But, at its heart, it's a catchall forum where rock geeks, IDM dudes, and sound hackers can all conceptually jam out. This month is about letting speakers become monsters that joyfully eat us all.

Beards, big earrings, and **Animal Collective** are all ingredients of a healthy summer. The bizarre quartet's new EP, *Water Curses* (Domino), doesn't break new ground, but offers more of the passive brilliance of 2005's *Feels* (Fat Cat). The seven-minute "Street Flash" is all delayed feedback and yelps while **Avey Tare's** vocals craft a gem that's as close to demented blues as these guys will ever get.

Thug rapper **N.O.R.E.** is back—yes, you read that right—with a 12" with Toronto duo **MSTRKRFT** called "Bounce" (Dim Mak). Whoda thunk that the former **Capone-N-Moreaga** MC would be on a dance track by a former **Death From Above 1979** member. Bump this—at least for its WTF value.

Raves, as we all know, are also back this summer—wait, no they're not. That was last year. Anywho, **Mochipet** and **BloodySnowman**, on their *Unicorn Glowsticks Rave Party* EP (Creaked), are betting on you being old enough to remember the late '90s. These two producers know nostalgia still has power, as the bpm's get angry on the nutso electro "Neon Wizard Championship" and "Electro888." Both brilliant tracks had me reaching for PLUR bracelets—so I could destroy them.

Two new singles to e-dig at those online record stores: Portland's **Nudge** has a new EP called *Infinity Padlock* (Auraglint) that rolls along with their signature (and terrific) post-rock and noisy beats. And ever wonder what Animal Collective's **Panda Bear** might sound like as an Ed Banger artist? Check the remix of "Comfy in Nautica" floating around the blogs... the nasty, uptempo

electro will make you shake a leg—trust me, it's better than you think.

Dutty Artz, the new experimental electronic label, keeps bringing heat with **Jahdan Blakkamoore's** *We Are Raiders 12"*. The single "Go Round Payola" finds producer **Matt Shadetek** coating the track in 8-bit synths and a bullying beat that gets ripped apart by Jahdan's magisterial vocals. Like a more sugary-voiced Junior Reid, Jahdan inspires much hope that there's more from where this gem came from.

Austin's gloom-rock whiz kids **My Education** drop their new album, *Bad Vibrations*, on the Strange Attractors Audio House label. "This Old House" is full of glorious, ambient-doom violin rock—as one might expect from a band that recently split a 12" with New Jersey doom-hop duo **dälek**. Other times, like on the disc's title track, they sound like a Texas version of Bardo Pond. Scoop this record up quick.

Other great stuff this month: Former **Liars** member Pat Noecker is the fat-ass bass behind **These Are Powers** on their brilliant, jittery *Taro Tarot* EP (Hoss). Check out "Chipping Ice," of particular appeal to Liars groupies.

Elsewhere, cosmic artwork and white rappers come together on **Juiceboxxx's** new 12", "Center Stage," featuring **Dre Skull**. It's a weirdly cultish-sounding dirty-disco track—with a guitar solo!

Mom always said to save the best for last, so here you go: **Four Tet's** latest EP, *Ringer* (Domino). **Kieran Hebden** leaves the free-jazz mumbo jumbo he's done with drummer **Steve Reid** and drops gorgeous, slinky ambient music ("Ribbons") and sundrenched micro-techno thumps ("Wing Body Wing") that should be on your headphones all summer.



### Drum & Bass Guest Reviews: Subfocus

Subfocus (a.k.a. Nick Douwma) got a lucky break back in 2003 when Ram Records head man Andy C took him under his wing. He has since established himself as a presence to be reckoned with in drum & bass circles, producing must-have dancefloor anthems like "X Ray" and "Airplane," which resulted in being asked to remix The Prodigy's "Smack My Bitch Up" for their greatest hits collection. Today the London DJ tours the world relentlessly, when he's not working on his debut album for Ram. And if you're in London on our Independence Day, make sure to catch him and Ram compatriots at The End club. Here's what he'll no doubt be raving when that evening comes. *Taryn Harrington* [myspace.com/subfocus](http://myspace.com/subfocus)

**CHASE & STATUS**  
"TAKE ME AWAY B/W "JUDGEMENT"  
Ram/UK/12

Love the vibe these guys are on lately. A teaser from their forthcoming album, "Take Me Away" distills a lot of the best bits of drum & bass from the last 10 years into one killer tune. The track features ravey vocals, skippy beats, and wobbling subs, but manages to combine them in a way that sounds really fresh. Also check "Judgement" on the flip for some futuristic ragga jungle as only they know how. *Subfocus*

**HAZARD**  
"MACHETE BASS EP  
Playaz/UK/12

Hazard has carved out his niche as the king of gritty jump-up D&B. The standout track here is "Machete," which is probably one of the most raw and distorted dancefloor tunes of any genre this year, packed with attitude. "Killers Don't Die" is also pretty special, combining Hazard's unique bass tones with a rhythm section with bags of funk. He manages to keep it dancefloor without ever sounding cheesy. *Subfocus*

**FRESH**  
"CLAP" B/W "EXHALE VIP"  
Breakbeat Kaos/UK/12

Fresh is one of my all time favorite producers, and was a massive inspiration for me when I began to write music. "Clap" revisits the style of his classic productions when he was part of the legendary Bad Company outfit. The VIP mix of "Exhale" is equally good, like a cross between Pendulum and The Prodigy, which can only be a good thing. *Subfocus*

**NOISIA**  
"DIPLODOCUS"  
Quarantine/UK/12

Some awesome new music from the Noisia guys, forthcoming on Fierce's label. These guys are really pushing the envelope on the complex, technical side of D&B production, but this track sees them go back to basics. "Diplodocus" is very minimal and extremely well produced, and should satisfy both fans of dancefloor and darker D&B. One of many new tunes featured on their forthcoming *FabricLive* mix CD, which is also well worth checking. *Subfocus*

THE NOTWIST  
THE DEVIL,  
YOU + ME

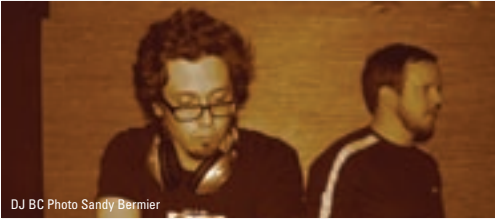
The long awaited follow up album to the critically acclaimed *Neon Golden*.  
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## Basic Needs By Kid Kameleon

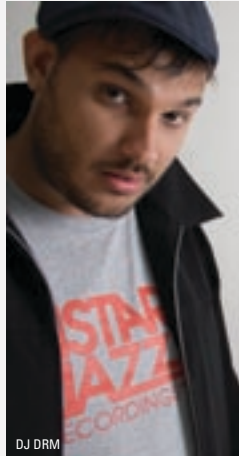
LOW-END NECESSITIES, FROM RAGGA TO DUBSTEP AND BEYOND



DJ BC Photo Sandy Bernier



Eskmo



DJ DRM

Bob Cronin (a.k.a. **DJ BC**) of Boston's Mash Ave. night stands head and shoulders above other mash-up artists in terms of pure originality, and good thing for us he's one of the world's most prolific mashers. His newest release is one of the best yet, taking old-school electro and mixing it up with hip-hop. How old-school, you ask? 1940s and '50s **Raymond Scott** and **Terry Riley** old-school, courtesy of Ellipsis Arts' *DHM* compilation of electronic music pioneers from a few years back. BC adds just enough beats to make the masters' electronic squiggles and bleeps groove, and just enough input from folks like **M.I.A.**, **Busta**, and **Lil Jon** to make it bump. Get it and a ton more at [djbc.com](http://djbc.com).

**Eskmo** (a.k.a. Brendan Angelides) has been slowly building a catalog of gems in the D&B and chill-out scenes, always focusing on the science fiction-like possibilities of sound. His productions have really hit their stride recently with a unique fusion of dubstep and breaks. First there was his awesome remix of **Primus**' "My Name Is Mud," then his truly sublime take on **Radiohead**'s "Nude." Now he's got the third release on Botchit and Scarper's dubstep side-label, Studio Rockers, and it's blinding ("Willow Grail" b/w "Process" and "Trudge"). Crisp drums spar with growling basslines in an ever-changing dance that's worthy of being a soundtrack to *Ninja Scroll*. Also be sure to check his remix of **DJ Quest** and Eskmo's "Speaker's Corner," done in collaboration with **Antiserum** and forthcoming on the Cyberfunk label. Spine-tingling stuff. Check [eskmo.com](http://eskmo.com) for more.

Great things are out already or coming out from the Bastard Jazz label. **See-I's** "The King" is awesome roots-style party music. **Subatomic Sound System**'s "Our Farther, Our King" is a wicked echo-fest thanks to a remix from **Victor Rice** and **Chronic Sonata**. **Drums of Death** reinterprets **Roots Manuva** to give him an easy swing that still kicks on the *Bastard Boots* series. And we'll soon see the release of **Jahrtari Riddim**



## Read the Label By Jesse "Drosco" Serwer

HIP-HOP MIXTAPES, WHITE LABELS, AND SHIT



410 Pharaohs



Darkroom Productions

Huntsville, Alabama is the latest Southern backwater to emerge on the rap map, thanks to upstart label Paper Route Recordz. With last year's breakout single "Wood Grain" still fresh, trendsetters **Diplo** and **DJ Benzi** have linked with the **Paper Route Gangstaz** (an even more extended version of **Hood Headlinaz**, the "supergroup" responsible for "Wood Grain") for *Fear and Loathing in Hunts Vegas*, a mixtape likely to turn names like **Mata the Dread Man** and **Mali Boi** into hipster party favorites. Featuring new cuts, "Wood Grain," and remixes from Diplo, **Flosstradamus**, and others, the result is a fusion of backwoods-y, dirt-road rap and Euro-futurism. Crank this.

Closer to the Mason-Dixon, *BET Uncut* fave and former Mush Records artist **Labtekwon** has teamed with B-more club OGs **DJ Booman** and **Jimmy Jones** as **410 Pharaohs**, whose *410 Funk* (Strictly Rhythm/III Friction) will be the first ever song-based B-more club album. The debut single, "Fresh," is just that but follow-up jawn "Hammer Dance" is an even more fly example of how Lab's bringing some real lyricism ("Club music is sex-u-al/Girl you wanna do it, just let me know/She put mucus on my test-a-cles/She won't let me go/I'm incred-a-bull") to the chant-based genre.

Elsewhere in Baltimore, **Darkroom Productions**—of *The Wire* and *Hamsterdam* mixtapes fame—are building up to their debut LP, *Hamsterdam: The Album* (Young American/Koch) with the **Get Em Mamis**' "Cold Summer" and "Money Talk" by **Ogun**. While "Cold Summer," with its absurd "brrrr!" sound effect, has that classic Darkroom bottom-heavy electro sound, "Money Talk" switches things up with a fuller, sample-based beat. Both go great with crab cakes.

**Devin the Dude**'s always loaded his albums with skits, parodies, and other drug-induced lyrical paraphernalia but *The Smoke Sessions Volume One*, his first mixtape, is pretty much all about that. The standout is "Da Real Thang" (first mentioned in my Devin feature in *XLBR #101*), which hilariously seeks to preserve the penis' good name amongst dildo-loving women ("It swings but it don't swang/It's not a natural ding-a-ling").

Originally released on his 2006 LP, *A Fly Guy's Theme*, Washington, DC representative **Tabi Bonney**'s "Beat Rock" (or "I'm From DC!") as the chorus goes) has resurfaced as a single and video (featuring Bonney, who directs, running maniacally around his city) in time for the upcoming release of his sophomore LP, *Dope Meet Fresh...Fresh Meet Superstar*. A handful of tracks from that album, meanwhile, have surfaced on iTunes, namely "Cool and Fly," a slow one with one of Bonney's patented falsetto ad libs ("Ri-ri-ridiculous"), and "Syce It," with its DC slang hook. Bamas, look out.

Producer **Scram Jones**' "Third Degree" (from his upcoming LP for Nature Sounds) featuring **Saigon**, **Crooked I**, and **Nino Bless** is one of the best posse cuts in a minute. Saigon and Crooked I need no introduction (nor should Jones, one of NYC's best producers) but Bless, a Brooklyn rapper who just dropped the solid *Untold Scriptures* mixtape, is one to watch out for.

Last but not least, the digital-only *Article* EP (Ghettoman Beats) is the first salvo from **The Program**, the newly formed duo of producer (and Read the Label favorite) **K-Def** and unknown Jersey rapper **Dacapo**. While Dacapo—an everyman type with a flow reminiscent of Large Professor—initially strikes one as an underwhelming foil for Def's immaculate beats, repeat listens to tracks, like the title song and "Day Dreaming," reveal an MC worth paying close attention to.

# FANIA REMIXED

A COLLECTION OF THE SOUGHT AFTER AND SOLD OUT FANIA 12 INCH SINGLES

# I LIKE IT LIKE THAT

FEATURES REMIXES & EDITS BY: AARON JEROME, DJ FORMAT, LOUIE VEGA, BUGZ IN THE ATTIC, GILLES PETERSON, SINBAD, JOAQUIN "JOE" CLAUSSELL, SHH, NICOLA CONTÉ, QUANTIC, 4 HERO, BONDÉ DE ROLE, SINDEN



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## Bubble Metropolis By **ML Tronik**

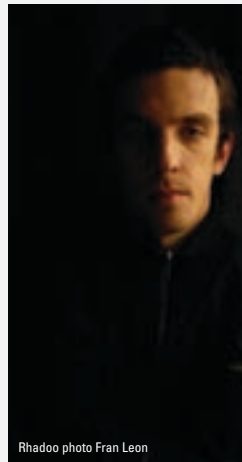
TECHNO: MINIMAL, BANGING, AND BEYOND



Anja Schneider



Oliver Huntemann



Rhadoo photo Fran Leon

The long-awaited first release from Luciano protégé **Rhadoo** is here, just in time to heat it up for summer. Let me tell you something—unless you know how to work a mix, don't even bother picking this one up. *Dar Mit Oru* (Cadenza) is a look into the dancefloor mind of a guy who, after a few bootlegs and remixes, has finally dropped a collection of original tracks. All four are extended, deep, yet still funky, with percussive elements floating around. Tracks "Bau" and "Elan" are the strongest, with "Slagare" a close third.

Also on a deep, summery vibe comes **Daso & Pawas'** latest, *Det* (Spectral), which unfolds into a deep melodic groove and rides it on out from there. Very nice, and a bit of a surprise coming from Spectral, whose usual output is decidedly more gritty. The release also comes with a dubby **Schatrax** mix that doesn't disappoint.

Out from the depths and back into the discotheque, it's a stomping new one from a duo named **Marascia & Dusty Kid**. Contrary to its name, "Sineless" (from *Sineless/Sawless*, on Systematic) brings some funky techno with a sinewave synth melody. And, yes, "Sawless" has a much more aggressive tone.

**Rekorder** is done. It's over. The electro-techno partnership of **Stephen Bodzin** and **Oliver Huntemann** has yielded the 11th and final release in the series, *Rekorder 00* (Rekorder), which, at press time, was slated as a one-sided vinyl-only release—and this one is probably the best of the lot. Following the same formula, "Rekorder 0.0" establishes its theme very quickly and works it to a frenzy. The same rapid-fire bassline pressure is there. The same drums are there. The same effects are there. But it's totally different and just as devastating as the previous 10. Laptop jocks,

maybe in between checking your email at the club and IMing your boyfriend you can ask a buddy to rip this one for you.

With the arrival of 19-year-old **Mr. Copy** (a Glaswegian discovery of Soma Records, who put out his first single, "Minerva") comes some jackin' stuff. Some dirtybird-esque bleeps up top and driving techno beats down low make the title track an impressive debut. And the pressure doesn't stop there. Be sure to check for the Let's Go Outside mix, which turns the original into a funky head-nodder. "Crysis" rounds out the release with more peak-time madness.

For a slice of good, solid techno music, you can't go wrong with **Reynold's** *Faze Part 1* (Trenton). This three-track offering shows off Reynold's ability to replicate techno styles of yore while also maintaining a modern feel. "Blue Steel" has building strings in a 313 fashion, and "Poison for My Mind" is deep and trippy, but the b-side, "Craft," is a wistful, electro masterpiece.

**Anja Schneider**, leader of the Mobelee label massive, has re-emerged with a new joint called "Mole," and I don't know what it is lately, but it seems like a lot of German techno cats are feeling the tribal vibes. "Mole" is deep, with sparse percussion and twisted synth elements riding throughout the entire track's druggy vibe. A solid remix by **Pan Pot** accompanies the original.

Finally, it's the legendary **Dan Curtin**. He was AWOL for a while, but he's been on a tear of late, dropping cuts at a nice clip. *Pull Up* (Leena Music) shows he's long past his Metamorphic label days, with two tracks of bouncy tech-house to keep things swinging, mellow, and moving.



## Hip-Hop Guest Reviews: Metaform

Hip-hop DJ/producer Metaform prefers to remain anonymous, tending to let his hyper-bred mix of styles speak for itself. The West Coast native has gained worldwide acclaim since his days as DJ Hai Ding in San Francisco's Fillmore district, and now he spreads his multi-instrumental street style between San Francisco, L.A., and Tokyo. From the comfort of his modest home studio, The Boom Box, in Tokyo, he combines all manner of samples with genre-bending beats, establishing his place next to folks like DJ Shadow and RJD2. And he showcases that work nicely on his newest album, *Standing on the Shoulder of Gaints* (JUST), where tracks like "Brick and Mortar" meld breakbeats and rock sounds to chilling effect. Below Metaform gives us a peek at what might inspire his next trip into The Boom Box. *Taryn Harrington*  
[myspace.com/meta4m](http://myspace.com/meta4m)

### PLIES "WHO'S HOTTER THAN ME"

Big Gates—Slip-N-Slide/US/12  
In his usual fashion, Plies seems intent on melting 1200s and iPods with this super-club-heating trunk-thumper. "Street cred don't get no higher," he says. This track is so hood that one cannot help but ghost-ride the whip. If you run out of matches, throw this on. *Metaform*

### FABO "PORK N' BEANS"

Dee Money/US/12  
"I wanna see you pork and beans," is the refrain uttered here with a sense of urgency over a hot, woofer-bangin' beat that demands that you get naked immediately. A rockin' party track sure to compel you to shake and move erratically. *Metaform*

### MICHELLE WILLIAMS "WE BREAK THE DAWN"

Music World—Columbia/US/12  
Michelle Williams is hot, period. Here she drops a great single with vocoder harmonies, catchy melodies, and awesome hooks. A very hopeful and youthful track with multiple layers of meaning. *Metaform*

### CHARLIE WILSON FT. SNOOP DOGG "LET IT OUT"

Jive/US/12  
What would be the next best thing to a new track by The Gap Band? Nothing really, but "Let it Out" comes close. Here, Charlie Wilson holds it down for the West with his powerful, timeless voice. For all you Gap Band fans, this will drop a bomb on you. *Metaform*

# Presto

## STATE OF THE ART

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## Fast Forward By Method One

EXPLORING THE BOUNDARIES OF DRUM & BASS



Outrage



Atlantic Connection



Andy Skopes & The Sith



## Reggae Rewind By Ross Hogg

THE HEARSAY AND DOWNLOW ON DANCEHALL, DUB, ROOTS, AND LOVERS ROCK



Anthony Cruz



Mavado

Over the history of this column, I have made sure to mention the good work being done by **Atlantic Connection** and his label, Westbay Recordings. In the interest of keeping things balanced, I was a little hesitant to talk about his latest release, but the new album, *Tomorrow's Not Enough*, is too intriguing to keep quiet about. While most drum & bass albums seem to be just a bunch of random tracks in pretty packaging, *Tomorrow's Not Enough* is much more ambitious and personal, with a broad sonic palette that includes hip-hop and electro, contributions by a diverse group of vocalists (**MC Tali**, **Armanni Reign**, **Deviant**, **Mental Sharp**, and more), and collaborations with **Lynx** and **LA Riots**. As one would expect from Atlantic Connection, a smooth summertime vibe dominates.

When it comes to drum & bass, I will always have a soft spot for artists and labels that aren't afraid to mix things up a little and color outside the lines. **Outrage's** Backlash Recordings certainly fits that description with "Grind House" b/w "Tabla Jam" by the mysterious **Secret Society**. "Grindhouse" is a study in dark minimalism that touches on classic early tech-step, while the flipside takes a journey into eerie Indian vibes. While we're discussing Outrage, I have to give some press to J-Tek Records, a label that is looking back to classic early jungle and hardcore to provide the missing link between today's drum & bass and dubstep scenes. With releases and support from such heavy hitters as **DJ Randall**, **Digital**, **Modular**, and **Aperture**, this is a sound to watch out for.

As one of the pioneers of the drum & bass sound, **Blame** has spent the last decade-and-a-half releasing notable tunes on labels such as Good Looking, Metalheadz, Moving Shadow, Charge, and his own 720 imprint. Now we can

add the new Blame Music label to that impressive list. "Hiro" and "Apocalypto" are the first tunes out of the gate, and each showcases a different style than one would expect from Blame. "Hiro" is the soundtrack to a futuristic kung fu flick, with loads of ethnic instruments resting nicely on a solid drum & bass framework. "Apocalypto" is darker and more dubby, with rolling kettle drums and a sweet old-school bell motif.

Another pioneer of drum & bass is **Phil Source** (of the legendary **Source Direct**), who has made a welcome return to the scene with his label Vampire Recordings. Vampire #9 is right around the corner, and features a unique pairing of tunes that is sure to appeal to a wide audience. "Waterpipe" by **Resound & Furi Anga** is a dark and deep roller that combines clever edits and an old-school vocal line to devastating effect. Techmospheric don **ASC** takes the flipside with the hypnotizing "Smartbomb." Layers of atmospheric start the journey, but soon enough a growling bassline cuts through the fog and sets the pace.

Resound is also featured on the digital-only *4 Rooms* EP on Translation Recordings, which also includes tunes by **Theory**, **Frisk**, and **Perpetuum**. Fans of breakbeat-focused drum & bass would do well to check it out, as all four are quality tunes.

Finally, for those who like their beats dark and brutal, Soothsayer Recordings has returned to the scene with "Drop the Truth" b/w "Murderous Rage" by **Andy Skopes & The Sith**. Fans of Soothsayer know what to expect: hard-as-nails rhythms combined with eerie cinematics. And this release doesn't disappoint. Mashed-out breakbeats fly from the speakers like machine gun bullets, decimating everything in their path. Of course, this is assuming your speakers survive the onslaught in the first place!

I'd be remiss if I didn't dedicate a portion of this issue's column to some very sad news, namely the passing of two giants in the world of reggae music.

Born Joel Gibson but better known as **Joe Gibbs**, the producer/distributor/label magnate had a storied career that launched in the rocksteady era of the late '60s when he began selling records out of his TV repair shop. He went on to found the Gibbs label and produce such timeless albums as **Culture's** *Two Sevens Clash* and his own four-chapter *African Dub* series. He recorded some of the genre's most storied acts, and he also had some of the best lines in the movie *Rockers* ("I don't give record—I sell record"), in which he played himself. Joe Gibbs passed away on February 21 at the age of 65. 17 North Parade, an imprint of VP Records, plans to release the complete Joe Gibbs catalog in the summer of 2008.

Michael Campbell, also known as **Mikey Dread**, sparked a musical revolution as a disc jockey at the Jamaica Broadcasting Corporation in the mid-'70s. His show, *Dread at the Controls*, played pure reggae music—a notable first for the JBC. He also launched a successful singing career and went on to produce songs for U.K. acts **The Clash** and **UB40**, among others. His 1979 *African Anthem* LP provided such classic vocal samples as "You make me feel so good," "The music just turns me on," and "We play dubwise selection without objection!" He passed away on March 15, at age 54.

Meanwhile, we are in the midst of a heated presidential election Stateside, and even though Jamaicans are ineligible to vote, some of the island's biggest vocal talents have made their political affiliations known. Both **Mavado** and **Cocoa Tea** have recorded songs in favor of Barack Obama. The highlight of Cocoa Tea's "Barack Obama" is his list of who the "new trendsetter" is *not*. (Hillary Clinton, John McCain, Chuck Norris, Rambo, and the Terminator: not the new trendsetter.) Mavado reworks his current Mission riddim smash "On the Rock" in his "We Need Barack," which earns bonus points for sampling the politician's speeches from the campaign trail and features a chorus in which he calls on Selassie I to guide Obama and help him become unstoppable.

Speaking of "On the Rock," that tune appears on the new *Ragga Ragga Ragga 2008* (Greensleeves) alongside hits from **Demarco**, **Busy Signal**, **Collie Buddz**, **Vybz Kartel**, **Mykal Rose**, **Serani**, and more.

Many of those same artists show up again on *The Black Chiney Show Vol. 8.9*, the stellar new mix from **Black Chiney SoundSystem** (free downloads are available at blackchiney.com). The seamless mix is filled with the latest riddims, Black Chiney dubplate specials, and selecta **Willy Chin**'s up-to-the-minute remixes. There are also some hilarious skits that'll have you saying "Bad man nuh friend fish!" (much to the confusion of all around you).

**Blackout**, producer of **Mims'** omnipresent smash "This Is Why I'm Hot," is back with the Sticks riddim, featuring "Die Do" by **Mr. Vegas** and "Rasta, Gangsta, Hustla" by **Munga**. It's dark, nasty, and dancehall-ready, but don't look for it to achieve ubiquitous ringtone status.

And finally, reggae crooner **Anthony Cruz** has a new release: *Fight With All Your Might* (VP), a modern lovers-rock album filled with re-licks of classic versions ("Love Is Falling" is over the Movie Star riddim and "Strangers in the World" is over the Stop the Fighting riddim) and even a cover of the **Isley Brothers** "For the Love of You."

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## Lucky 13 By Toph One

TophOne spins weekly at the RedWine Social, White Label, Saints & Sinners, and Funkside in San Francisco



Universe Crew



Santogold

It's about hopping on the bike with nothing to do, nowhere to go, and just riding for the pure joy of riding and being alive. Lazy Saturdays along the Portland riverfront and fast Tuesdays around S.F. and the weird and productive thoughts that come with them. The brilliance of Burroughs, Steinski (check the new retrospective, *What Does It All Mean?*), and Crayone. A well-placed mug of pink grapefruit juice or the perfect sourdough toast can make any day. And there isn't a bill in the world that a good bartender and the open road can't fix.

### 1. LIGHTNING HEAD "NPC"

Lion Head/UK/12EP  
Glyn "Bigga" Bush of Rockers Hi-Fi fame heats it up once again with this Afrobeat burner for the summertime sessions. Good God, man, how'd this guy get so funky? Open up the doors and windows and invite the neighbors—this is the joint.

### 2. SMALL CHANGE "STEVIANO ITALIANO"

Bstrd Boots/US/7  
My man Small Change is anything but, and he throws down some big soul sounds on this lil' nugget. Track it, and damn near anything else, on this bootleg label. Take my word for it: girls + art shows + free wine + this = good times.

### 3. SANTOGOLD "CREATOR"

Downtown/US/12  
Freaky-deak! Like some mutant blend of M.I.A. and Bonde do Role with a bit of Berlin thrown in ta' boot, Santi White forges a heavy, electrified alloy that both confounds and delights.

### 4. JAMES PANTS WELCOME

Stonesthrow/US/LP, CD  
All you need is a strobelight and a fog machine and you're set. Sexxy electro-lust for aging hipsters and kids too young to even know. Delicious.

### 5. M.I.A.

#### "PAPER PLANES (HOMELAND SECURITY REMIXES)"

Interscope/US/12  
Hotness! As if guest verses from the likes of Bun B weren't enough. As if King Ad Rock on the reggae remix isn't enough. As if the *original* wasn't already one of the hottest shits out there—we got DFA with a serious dub-disco stomper to shake things up and get the job done right.

### 6. MAKESTAPES/LE FEELINGS

"CLOSE YOUR EYES AND SLEEP/ DAY BY DAY"  
indie/US/7  
Houston's MakesTapes comes through with a warm, fuzzy head-nodder on the a-side, while Le Feelings (best band name ever?) works the exotica angle on the flip. When I get my own bar, both these guys will have their own nights.

### 7. PEABODY & SHERMAN "CHICAGO BLOWBACK REMIX"

Super Bro/US/12  
Loopy, dubby goodness from my second favorite place on Earth. Come to think of it, it *does* kinda sound like a ride on the Red Line El. Music to get "defragged and slightly plastered" (their words) to. My kind of lads.

### 8. THA ARCHIVES "THE DREAM CAME TRUE"

white/US/12  
A solid vinyl debut from this underground tape slanger from Oakland. Big soul samples carry side one, while the West Coast funk shines through on the flip.

### 9. EXISTEREO & DEESKEE "CRY ME A RIVER"

Nice/US/7  
Twisted hip-hop and strange tales from the southland. It's as if John Lydon were sitting in the corner of the *Paul's Boutique* sessions with the Dust Brothers. M-Fusion adds the outer-space funeral-dirge vibe to his remix on the b-side.

### 10. B.DOLAN "LIVE EVEL"

Strange Famous/US/12  
It's hard not to love a record dedicated to the memory of Evel Knievel, and joined by Sage Francis and Alias on "Heart Failure," B.Dolan gives up the goods. Long live that real American badass.

### 11. PROTASSOV SHALINA MUSIC

Switchstance/GER/CD  
Jazzy downtempo grooves from Germany's Protassov, and a fine label to get acquainted with as well. Look for the new Ancient Astronauts disc on the label, too. Tasty stuff indeed.

### 12. K'NAAN THE DUSTY FOOT PHILOSOPHER

Interdependent Media/US/CD  
Even though this album was originally released in 2005, K'Naan's voice and music sound new and vital on this domestic re-release. A native of the war-torn streets of Mogadishu, Somalia, this cat was rapping in English before he could even speak the language, and now he holds it down with the best of them.

### LUCKY 13) UNIVERSE CREW W/ ADRIAN SHERWOOD

LIVE AT THE DOUBLE DOOR  
12:10—Forty-Five Films/US/DVD  
For fans of the Midwest Funk zone, or On U Sound collectors, this little nugget captures a night in Chicago back in '97 with Toledo's U-Crew and the legendary Adrian Sherwood working the board, and the collaboration is brilliant.



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## IN THE STUDIO: BOOKA SHADE

GETTIN' PHYSICAL WITH BERLIN'S ELECTRO-HOUSE KINGS AND THEIR MULTIFACETED LIVE SETUP.

WORDS: BRANDON IVERS PHOTO: RAGNAR SCHMUCK

When artists rail on about subtlety and stepping away from the almighty riff, a red flag tends to go up. In the case of Berlin's Booka Shade, though, careful refinement has always been part of their 20-year-plus process. With their roots in synth-pop bands, producer Walter Merziger and drummer Arno Kammermeier have always erred on the side of stripped-back groove, long before minimal techno made it fashionable. Booka Shade's latest album, *The Sun and the Neon Light*, has the familiar weight of their breakout release, *Movements*, but with a more spacious, experimental edge. Tracks like "Psychameleon" trade house's pulse for a glittery swing, built from a malfunctioning Korg Poly-800 synth and a vocoded whisper. It's a sound that can be delicate, but never thin—a change at least partially due to the duo's renewed interest in vintage hardware and acoustic instruments. Here they talk about the benefits of dragging 600 lbs. of gear clear across the ocean.

**XL88R: Does the term "electro-house" make any sense regarding what you do?**

Arno Kammermeier: When a name for a style is found, you're already lost. People start working with a strict formula, the beats get too hard, and it stops being sexy. Similarly, on *Movements*, all the songs were riff-oriented, and we felt like that was done. On *The Sun and the Neon Light*, we decided to find a different way. One of the first things we did was a song called "Duke." It's darker, more cinematic, and it has this little hook—it sounds more like something from our first album, *Memento*.

**What's the draw of stepping outside of purely computer-based production?**

Walter Merziger: For one, analog synthesizers don't always work in the same way. You hit one key and it sounds this way; you hit it again and it sounds totally different. It depends on so many things, even the temperature of the room. But since we do use plug-ins sometimes, we might run the sound through an amp or speakers and mic it to get the sound of the room. If it's low in the mix, sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't, but it gives a certain texture that plug-ins don't have.

**Is there still a place for hardware compressors and effects in your setup?**

WM: We have an LA-4 from UREI that's good for bass sounds—if you need them more flat, for example. But really, I don't hear that much of a difference between old compressors and the

emulations. We had [vintage compressors] in the past—Tube-Techs and Fairchilds—and I know how they sound. But with [plug-ins] like Pro Tools' Fairchild emulation, I can get very close to that sound.

**How do you pull off your live performances?**

WM: The thing you see most directly is Arno, because he is playing drums and the [Roland V-Drum] triggers. Keyboards aren't as sexy in a live situation. But what I try to do is find a balance between playing and doing the things you can do with modern production, like with delays and EQs and Ableton [Live]—I manipulate those things live. If all I did was play the keyboards, I'd get bored... it's too old-school. So I have a custom-made controller for Ableton, and I drop in loops and melodies from the clip page that go with 12 tracks on the arrangement page, where the bass and snare are on their own tracks. That goes into a Midas [mixing] desk, along with my keyboards, a [Roland] V-Synth, and a vocoder, so I can sing along with the melodies. A second computer runs Logic, and has all my plug-ins and samples on it, which I play from another keyboard. This way, I can play the riff of "Mandarine Girl," and I can do little variations on whatever I want. I can decide it would be more fun to play around with audio clips, or a Korg Kaoss Pad, or just play keyboards. I have a lot of flexibility.

**How do you tour with all that gear?**

WM: It's not easy! [Everything] weighs about 300 kg, and we take it from Bucharest to Lisbon to Glastonbury. We created custom cases to hold everything—cases in cases, because of how stuff gets thrown around on airplanes. And then there's the sensitive things... we have four laptops, with visuals, LED lights, and keyboards that are all synchronized via MIDI. In the past we did 200 shows with our old setup and only had four crashes. So this year, we're playing at these big festivals—Coachella and Lollapalooza—and we're bringing all this gear. [Meanwhile] a band like Nine Inch Nails has 10 people setting up everything for them and a sound check. We have 15 minutes and just the two of us.

Booka Shade's *The Sun and the Neon Light* is out now on Get Physical. [bookashade.com](http://bookashade.com)



IN BOOKA SHADE'S STUDIO: APPLE LOGIC, KORG POLY-800 SYNTHESIZER, KORG KAOSS PAD



## ARTIST TIPS: BOSTICH & FUSSIBLE

As members of Tijuana's Nortec Collective, Bostich (Ramón Amezcua) and Fussible (Pepe Mogt) gave Mexico's traditional accordion- and horn-heavy Norteño sound some mass appeal by fusing it with electronic beats. With their recent collaboration, *Tijuana Sound Machine* (Nacional), the production tag team goes for a more organic sound, putting extra emphasis on acoustics. There may be obvious hints of house, techno, and D&B peppered throughout, but it's the use of live instruments that gives *TSM* its futuristic mariachi swing. Here, Fussible breaks down how they gave traditional instruments the Pro Tools treatment. *Zoneil Maharaj*  
myspace.com/tijuanasoundmachine

### TUBA

Some of the tuba sequences on *Tijuana Sound Machine* were sampled from previously recorded albums. We cut them up in Ableton Live and completely changed the melody and rhythm. We recorded other tuba lines with a Rode mic to then be processed through the SSL Channel Strip compressor. On songs like "Norteña del Sur" and "Rosarito" we used the Walfdorf D-Pole filter plug-in to give a more deep, rough sound.

### BAJO SEXTO GUITAR

For this instrument, we usually recorded chords first with a synthesizer or piano. Then the guest musicians interpreted those chords with the *bajo sexto* (it looks like a 12-string guitar but the sound is much deeper). We then passed the music through various effects like the Sherman Filterbank, Electro-Harmonix Memory Man delay, and the Frostwave Sonic Alienator, giving it a rough, space-alien sound. In some songs, the *bajo sexto* was transposed 12 semitones lower to give it a sound similar to a bass.

### ACCORDION

We always record the accordion directly to Pro Tools, using the Waves Reverb and OhmForce OhmBoyz delay plug-in. On some tracks, there were microseconds of accordion that were processed with Ableton Live's Beat Repeater. Sometimes the accordion didn't have the tone that we needed, so we had to transpose the accordion's sound. On "Jacinto," we transposed the accordion an octave or more to give it a more atmospheric sound.

### CLARINET

The clarinet has a very delicate sound, so we were very subtle with its use on songs like "Wanted" and "Brown Bike." Sometimes it's not even recognizable even though it was recorded very clean. We used a lot of Memory Man delay on it, ending up most times with an ambient sound with significant EQ changes through the SSL Channel Strip.

### DRUMS

When it came to the percussion, we first recorded various sessions on the Roland TR-909 Rhythm Composer, then showed them to a live drummer so that he could interpret them. The bass drum—which is played by hand and brought through an integrated ride (like the ones that marching bands use, but much larger)—and the snare and cymbals were recorded to Pro Tools and later processed through various external effects like the Sherman Filterbank, Soundcraft Folio SX EQ, and the Sonalksis KB3 plug-in. Many rhythms were processed with distortion filters. Those acoustic rhythms were eventually mixed with the TR-909, TR-808, Linn Drum, and the Sequential Circuits DrumTraks.

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## RETURN OF THE MACK

### MACKIE D.4 PRO PRODUCTION CONSOLE W/FIREWIRE

Just about everything these days is high-tech, including tanks. Mackie's workhorse mixers take the same battle-ready approach, combining sturdy design with digitally enhanced features. The d.4 Pro production console joins the growing integrated-mixer market and combines traditional and modern features. It's part DJ mixer, part audio interface and is designed for use with any digital DJ software, but specifically certified for Traktor Scratch. The standard DJ features also excel.

The blue backlighting and smooth optical crossfader are just a few positives; the four-channel mixer also includes on-board filter effects, multiple mic channels with Onyx pre-amps, and enough audio inputs to connect decks, CD players, control surfaces, and computer simultaneously. A built-in audio interface and 14x8 FireWire connectivity allow playback with timecode records or CDs without a separate converter box.

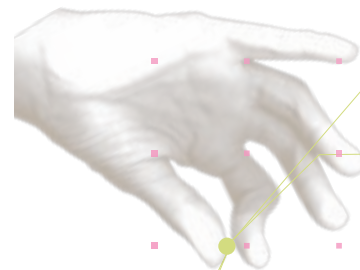
Not being a Traktor or Serato user, I tried another digital mixing experiment. I used the d.4 Pro to handle Ableton Live for a DJ mix, and was able to assign MIDI

control to the crossfader after a couple of tries. I was disappointed to find out you can't assign MIDI control to other features such as channel volume or loop launch. Its FireWire integration isn't perfect—it can't replace a dedicated MIDI control surface yet—but the sound output is superior.

The d.4 Pro is bundled with the powerful Mackie Traktion production software to record your mixes or make original beats. However, if you get this mixer plus the additional \$339 Traktor Scratch upgrade kit (software and timecode vinyl) to play digital tunes, you'll be paying about \$700 more than a standard Serato Scratch Live setup (minus mixer). Still, some DJs and sound engineers will value d.4 Pro's stable, unified design with all the ports and features you'd need for club play. And like an armored vehicle with laser guidance, the d.4 Pro is a tough unit that hits the mark.

*Tomas Palermo*

**MSRP: \$1149.99; mackie.com**



### CASIO PRIVIA PX-320 DIGITAL PIANO

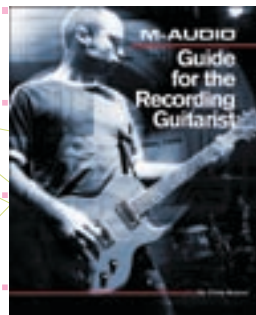
This is not your father's Casio. You know, the one with thin plastic keys and sounds *only* a mother could love? The Casio Privia PX-320 has an impressive 128-note polyphony and very realistic piano action, making it a **serious contender in the semi-pro and portable digital-piano market**. If you're after an 88-key MIDI acontroller, this might not be the board for you, as it lacks pitch-bend, knobs, faders, and other common controller features. But for pianists (yes, we know, there's no substitute for a real piano) looking for a portable gig/practice piano, the PX-320 is highly recommended. It has the best sound, action, weight (25 lbs!), and size of all the form-factor digital pianos I've seen for under \$700. In fact, the Privia's features easily equal or beat many competing models that are two to three times the price. *Aaron Beachnau*

**MSRP: \$699; casio.com**

### BOOSTED GRANDE HEADPHONES

While they may share their name with a certain large-size caffeinated beverage, and are sold at a retail location known to many as URBN, Boosted's Grande makes a pretty cool pair of headphones. Essentially, **through an advanced technology called "various adapters included," Boosted attempts to transform your headphones to suit your every need**: They've got a cell phone-compatible mini-plug at the end, along with adapters for regular eighth-inch headphone jacks, iPhone, and even a quarter-inch adapter for DJ mixers. The answer/end-call button and in-line microphone make them perfect for use with your cellie, and the big, soft, swiveling earcups make them field-ready for mixing records. The Grande isn't quite the booming-est pair of DJ headphones ever created, but the versatility is impressive and the colorways are hot. (Oh, and they're not all quite as "Look at me!" as the above pair, if people looking at you isn't, you know, your thing.) *Evan Shamoan*

**MSRP: \$70; boostedmobile.com**



### M-AUDIO GUIDE FOR THE RECORDING GUITARIST TUTORIAL BOOK

While Chris Buono's comprehensive guide to guitar recording places emphasis on using M-Audio hardware and software, *Guide for the Recording Guitarist* is easily one of the most practical reference books for anyone utilizing the guitar in their home studio. In other words, you don't have to be a Christopher Willits enthusiast to get down with it. Featuring extensive chapters on mixing and mastering, the most efficient and dynamic ways to mic your rig, and more than enough information on combining MIDI technology with your axe, **this reference book will serve the sampling techno technician as much as any burnout trying to record his interpretation of "War Pigs."** This is a must-have for any producer or songwriter with a passion for Pro Tools, as the guide takes a simple yet detailed step-by-step approach to the software. Slay on, brothers. *Fred Miketa*

**MSRP: \$34.99; courseptr.com**



### KORG KAOSILATOR DYNAMIC PHRASE SYNTHESIZER

Someday, we'll be able to make music with rollerblades and virtual reality, but until then, the Kaossilator is a worthy compromise. This strange yellow box might look like a gimmick at first, but what you can accomplish with one finger and barely any musical knowledge is ridiculous. Turn it on, and you can scroll through an exhaustive list of beats, chords, synths, bass, and sound effects, all of which can be sequenced simultaneously into one-to-two-bar phrases. To "play" it, just put your finger on the small black pad, and the rest is self-explanatory. Yeah, some of the presets are cheesy, but when you rub your finger around the pad and everything goes *WoooEerrrEErr*, it's really easy to forget good taste. Unfortunately, it doesn't offer MIDI capability or any other bells 'n' whistles, but **as an inspirational sketchpad, the Kaossilator's usefulness outweighs any such limitations.**

*Brandon Ivers*

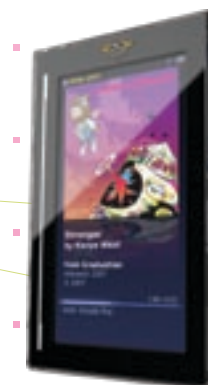
**MSRP: \$199; korg.com**



### ALESIS iMULTIMIX8 USB MIXER W/IPOD

As The Clapper and Taco Bell have proven, there's something to be said for convenience. Take DJing: **Sometimes you just wanna run up in your spot, shut the doors, throw down some records, and take the mix with you on your iPod.** Enter what is now officially the easiest way to do that: Alesis' iMultiMix8, an all-in-one tabletop mixer and recorder with USB connectivity and an integrated iPod dock (with control-wheel transport controls) for fast, easy direct-to-iPod recording. As both an input mixer and an audio interface, it comes through: It has eight channels (with three-band EQ per channel), balanced quarter-inch inputs and outputs, and 100 easily accessible effects (reverbs, delays, chorus, etc). It's a very solid (if not quite super-pro quality), well-constructed mixer, but what really sets it apart is the ability to record your sets directly to iPod, and easily transfer them directly to iTunes—no special drivers necessary. *Evan Shamoan*

**MSRP: \$300; alesis.com**



### SLACKER PORTABLE INTERNET RADIO PLAYER

Slacker.com's internet-radio web interface is a hit for dudes like me who want to listen to '80s alternative all day long. Of course, no one can just stop there—every web-based music purveyor wants a piece of the portable-player market, too. But not everyone is Apple, and this point is painfully driven home with Slacker's portable listening device. First problem: PC only... kinda. You can get it running on a WiFi network, if you can get the control surface to input a network's password without going squirrely. The problem lies firstly in the unit's shoddy "touch" screen (only part of the screen is touch-sensitive, which the unit never accurately responds to anyway). If you can get your fingers around the bulky (and cheaply constructed) unit, you'll find that the physical scroll wheel and buttons seem like they're intentionally made to *not* be pressed. If you get there, the sound quality's not bad, but **the design and engineering were a slacker job indeed.** *Derek Grey*

**MSRP: \$199-299; slacker.com**

# SUMMER LOVIN'!

Which of these Hollywood supermen is going to heat up your summer?

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL

OMG! Summer Blockbuster Season '08 is totes here! *American Idol* may be over, but fear not! All the hottest Hollywood hunks are here to not only melt your heart at the box office but also your eyeballs, with all manner of interactive entertainment! They may not tickle your loins like the smooth, masculine tones of David Archuleta but they kick more ass than all three Jonas Brothers combined! ROFLMAO!



### A Hard Man Is Good to Find *Iron Man*

Iron Man has already steamrolled fans at the multiplex but now it's time for you to get under Robert Downey Jr.'s armor (and the comely 'stache-meow!) as you battle the nefarious Iron Monger on land and in the air. In what is perhaps the first movie tie-in game that isn't total garbage, *Iron Man* features Downey Jr. and Terence Howard lending their talents to help move units and ensure the sequel hits before 2010.

*Iron Man* (Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS, PSP) is out now from Sega.

### Faster Than Texting and Twice as Handsome! *Speed Racer*

Starring the voices of dashing studs Emile Hirsch and Matthew Fox as well as top-heavy dwarf Christina Ricci, *Speed Racer* brings all the wild car-fu of the Wachowski Brothers silver-screen acid trip to the Wii and DS. For fans of futuristic race classics like *F-Zero* and *WipeOut*, *Speed Racer* lives up to its name on the console without the ugly road rash.

*Speed Racer* (Wii, DS) is out now from Warner Bros. Interactive.

### Whip Us Good! *LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures*

We love older men here at *XLR8R*. It's true. Their fragility gets us moist. And when we can take total control of the LEGO version of Harrison Ford... well, it doesn't get much more hip-breakingly fragile than that. *LEGO Indiana Jones'* tongue-in-cheek style lets you play as almost every character from Marion to Mola Ram while living out all the whip-lashings, snake-induced pants-pissing, and boulder escapes of the first three films.

*LEGO Indiana Jones: The Original Adventures* (Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS, PSP) is out in June from LucasArts.

### Lean, Green, and Big All Over *The Incredible Hulk*

If dumb muscle is more your thing, then look no further than Ed Norton's version of *The Incredible Hulk*. A free-roaming destruct-o-thon, *The Incredible Hulk* game takes to the streets of NYC as the Green Machine battles General "Thunderbolt" Ross, who is bent on caging the muscleman in ripped jeans for military purposes... or whatever. Run up the side of the Empire State Building, rip the tops off tanks in Central Park, or hail a cab by throwing another cab at it! Mutant monsters, they're just like us!

*The Incredible Hulk* (Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS, PSP) is out in June from Sega.

### We're Screamin' Demon! *Hellboy: The Science of Evil*

Like a Fonzie from the Underworld, *Hellboy* is the epitome of cool. Even when battling undead Nazis, robot armies, or giant, otherworldly jellyfish, he is always quick with a joke or a light of his smoke. But there is no place he'd rather be than kicking ass—which is what *Science of Evil* is all about. While the story doesn't really follow the Guillermo del Toro film, the gist remains the same: pummel, blast, and otherwise obliterate the supernatural baddies that get in your way.

*Hellboy: The Science of Evil* (Xbox 360, PS3, PSP) is out in June from Konami.

### Back in Block *LEGO Batman: The Video Game*

While this summer's *Dark Knight* film focuses on the brooding, damaged, and sexified version of Batman, *LEGO Batman* takes a more light-hearted, yet somehow equally badass, approach to the Gotham Knight-like *LEGO Star Wars* and *LEGO Indiana Jones* before it, the game allows you to not only become a short, blocky version of the Batman but all his foes and allies as well. Rumor has it you can even mix and match! Think of the possibilities—Batman's pecs, the Penguin's be-monocled grill, and Robin's legendary package! The perfect hero?

*LEGO Batman: The Video Game* (Xbox 360, PS3, Wii, PS2, DS, PSP) is out in September from Warner Bros. Interactive.

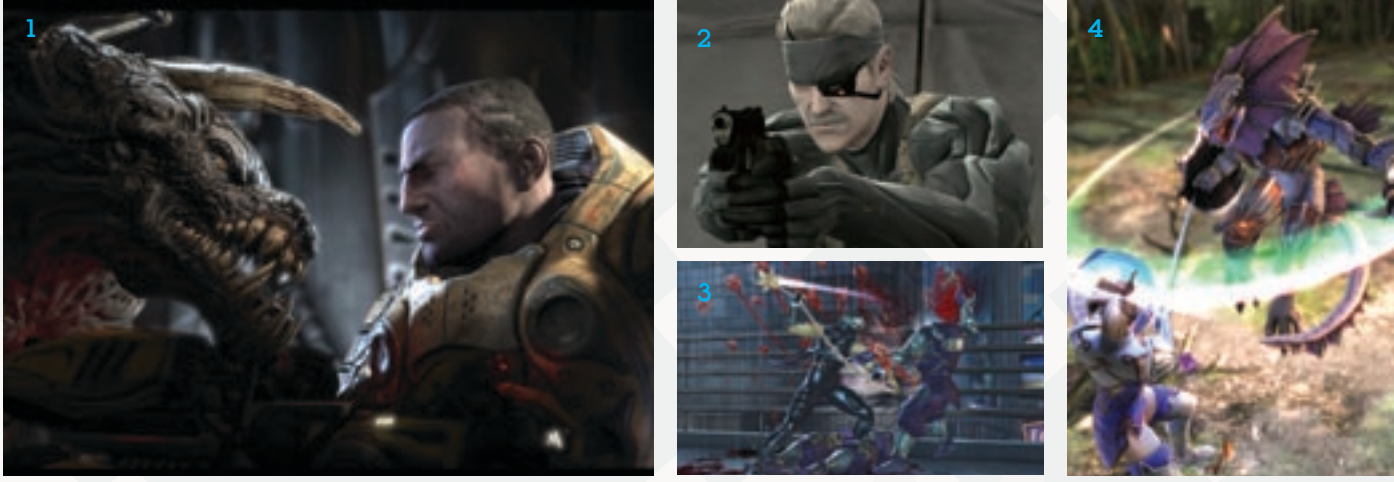




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XLR8R picks the hottest videogames and gear of the month.

WORDS RYAN RAYHILL



Summertime, and the living is easy. Have a drink, take a drive, go out and see what you can find. And think of the summers of the past. Adjust the bass and let the Alpine blast. Amen.  
 Speaking of blasts... Widely credited as a forefather of first-person shooters, the *Unreal* series has continued to improve upon every iteration, and this month's ***Unreal Tournament III*** (Midway) for the Xbox 360 certainly represents a high-water mark for the genre. An explosively brilliant solo campaign is surpassed only by the robust online multiplayer that should give current Xbox Live faves *Halo 3* and *Call of Duty 4* a run for their Microsoft Points.

The PS3 has had a few great titles in its bumpy life span, but few will mean as much to its continued momentum as the cinematic epic ***Metal Gear Solid 4: Guns of the Patriots*** (Konami). Exclusive to Sony's console (for now), *MGS4* follows what has been said to be the final mission of stealth operative Solid Snake, now in his twilight years, but still able to single-handedly take out an army of genetic super-soldiers, disarm a nuke, and have plenty of time left for a smoke. How important is *MGS4*? Director Hideo Kojima, who created the series back in 1987, had planned on passing the torch this time around, but rabid fans not only vehemently protested, they sent death threats. That's when you know you're special.

While on the subject of death threats, few deaths are more threatening than those carried out by ninjas! And ***Ninja Gaiden II*** (Microsoft; Xbox 360) brings the pain like few others before it. While there is a story about clans, honor, and demons, the real reason you should play this is because it's chockfull of blood, dismemberment, and evisceration to the point of awesome ridiculousness. As super-ninja Ryu, you comb the Earth from Venice to New York using all manner of giant blades to hack away at your monstrous foes, unraveling an evil conspiracy. Hands-down the best looking (and most gruesome) arcade/action title this year.

On the bladed weapon tip (*sans* the viscera) the revered sword-fighting series ***Soul Calibur IV*** (Namco Bandai; Xbox 360, PS3) will feature online play and at least 25 different characters, each with their own weapons and styles, including—get this—the Lord of the Sith himself, Darth Vader! Oh, but that's not all. Yoda is also on board to poke combatants a new rear portal. How the *Star Wars* universe fits into the *Soul Calibur* universe, we have no idea, but as long as there are sword fights on the Death Star, we're cool.

And if you want to dust off the part of your brain that played chess with your granddad once, this month brings ***Final Fantasy Tactics A2: Grimoire of the Rift*** (Square-Enix; DS), the first true sequel to the strategy classic *Final Fantasy Tactics*. Taking place in the same universe as *Final Fantasy XII*, *Grimoire's* gameplay is set up on a turn-based grid system; you and your clan choose various races and skills to take out a criminal syndicate that is running roughshod over the land. *Grimoire* is a deep and rewarding experience for those with a penchant for organization, details, and a lot of time.

Last, but not least, comes perhaps this month's most interesting release, ***Guitar Hero: On Tour*** (Activision; DS). As wildly popular as the series is, we all knew it would come to the portable machines sooner or later, but how the hell did they pull off a guitar controller on the lil' DS? Well, not only did they make it work, they made it feel awesome. By holding the DS vertically, plugging the fretboard attachment into a port, and strumming on the touch pad, rocking on the road is now possible with dozens of new tracks from the likes of Nirvana, OK Go, and Twisted Sister.

1. **UNREAL TOURNAMENT III**
2. **METAL GEAR SOLID 4: GUNS OF THE PATRIOTS**
3. **NINJA GAIDEN II**
4. **SOUL CALIBUR IV**

Catch the weekly Loading... column at [XLR8R.com/news](http://XLR8R.com/news).

## 10TH ANNUAL

WRITE OVER 400 ARTISTS BOOKED, DECIBEL FESTIVAL HAS ESTABLISHED SEATTLE AS AN INTERNATIONAL HUB FOR ELECTRONIC MUSIC PERFORMANCE & CUTTING-EDGE VISUAL ART. THIS SEPTEMBER WE INVITE YOU TO COME CELEBRATE... PREVIOUS DECIBEL PERFORMERS: [A]PENDICS.SHUFFLE \* LLUV \* 3 CHANNELS \* 302 ACID \* ABE DUQUE \* ACID CIRCUS \* ADLIB \* AROCC \* AKUFEN \* ALEX SMOKE \* ALLAND BYALLO \* ANDREAS TILLIANDER \* ANTIQUO AUTOMATA MEXICANO \* APPARAT \* AU TEECHER \* BEEHIVE \* BENDER \* BEYONDA \* BIOSPHERE \* BLUE SCHOLARS \* BOLA \* BOYS NOIZE \* BRETT JOHNSON \* BRYAN ZENTZ \* BRUNO PRONSAITO \* CAMEA \* CAROL \* CAROLE KIM \* CEPIA \* CHIKA \* CHRIS DELUCA VS. PHON.O \* CHRISTOPHER WILLIAMS \* CIRCLE SQUARE \* CLAUDE VONSTROKE \* CLEVER \* CNS ENGINEERING \* COBBLESTONE JAZZ \* CODEBASE \* CODEBREAKER \* COPY \* CTRL\_ALT\_DELETE \* DABRYE \* DAVIDE SQUILLACE \* DEADBEAT \* DECEPTIKON \* DEREK FISHER \* DEREK MICHAE... ELLEN ALLIEN \* ENDUSER \* FAX \* FCS NORTH \* FENNESZ \* FOSCIL \* FOURCOLORZACK \* FREAKY CHAKRA \* FRIVOLOUS \* GEL-SOL \* GEOFF WHITE \* GREEN VELVET \* GREENSTAR \* GREG SKIDMORE \* GUI BORATTO \* GUNS 'N' BOMBS \* HAKKA \* HAROLD BUDD \* HER SPACE HOLIDAY \* INSIDEOUT \* INTRODUCT... JAMIE JUPITER \* JEFF SAMUEL \* JEN WOOLFE \* JEREMY ELLIS \* JERO... JON MCMILLION \* J-SO... JUSTICE \* KATE DEEJAH STREETS \* KANGDING RAY \* KATE... KODE 9 \* KONSTANTIN GABBRO \* KRIS MO... KRISTINA CHILDS \* LATINSIZER \* LE... LEVI CLARK \* LOWFISH \* LUOMO \* LUSINE \* M... MACHINE DRUM \* MARCUS NIKOLAI \* MAT ANDERSON \* MATMOS \* MATT CROWLEY \* MC ANTON BOMB \* M'CHA... MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO \* MERCIR... MICHAEL MANAHAN \* MICHAEL MAYER \* MIDWEST PRODUCT \* MIKAEL SP... MIKE SHANNON \* MISHA \* MISTER LEISURE \* MOCHIPET \* NORTEC COLLECTIVE \* NOVATRON \* NU... NUDOL \* PHILIP SHERBURNE \* PHOENIC... IRISARRI \* RAMIRO \* RANDY JONES \* RE... ROBIN JUDGE \* ROUHO RUOTSI \* RYAN... 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VIS-ED

# Damien Correll

Amish flea markets and Xerox machines inspire a Philly native's hand-drawn haiku.

Left:  
Damien Correll exclusive  
for *XLR8R* Vis-Ed, 2008

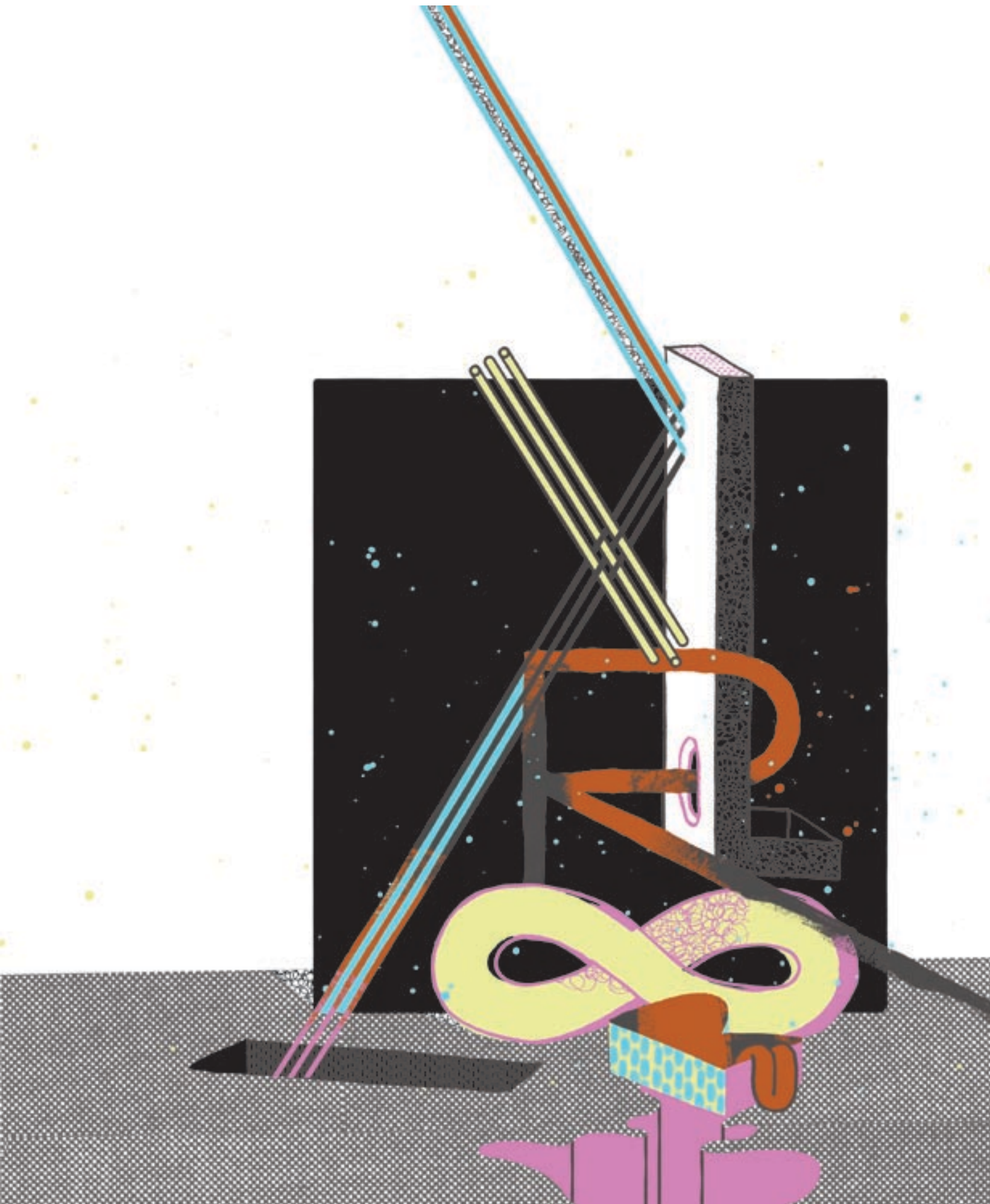
“I am not ashamed to reuse a good idea if I don't think I gave it justice the first time around,” says Brooklyn-based designer/illustrator/self-described “maker” Damien Correll.

His organic, playful style—which references early *Sesame Street* animations, '70s interior design, and '50s product logos—is as diverse as the media he employs, from collage to painting to pen 'n' ink. (For a glorious display of his hand-drawn fonts see the recent book, *Hand Job*.)

This 26-year-old Pennsylvania native and Futura font fanatic has built a structured career from his seemingly bottomless will to outdo himself. After attending Philadelphia's esteemed University of the Arts, Correll relocated to Brooklyn and was soon hired as senior designer for Urban Outfitters. In his two years there, he created dozens of new typefaces and replicas of album covers for ads. Since leaving the chain, he's collaborated with clients as diverse as Nike, Nickelodeon, snowboard company Rome SDS, and indie labels Polyvinyl and Plug Research. His magazine work has been equally varied, encompassing illustrations for *New York Magazine*, *IdN*, and *Complex*, and work for zines like UPSO's *Faesthetic* and Shepard Fairey's *Swindle*, to which he regularly contributes.

Most recently, Correll has released a series of Zoo York skate decks (with *Hand Job* compiler Mike Perry), gotten engaged, and begun to work in a collaborative space with the Rad Mountain collective (which also includes Justin “Demo” Fines, Wyeth Hansen, Garrett Morin, and Ryan Waller). “I think my new stuff is my favorite,” he says. “It feels like I am coming into my own a little. But I'm sure I would have had that same response five years ago, or even five years from now.”

[damiencorrell.com](http://damiencorrell.com)





above:  
Collaboration  
with Mike Perry  
for Zoo York, 2007

**Where did you develop an interest in typography?**

When I was around seven or eight, I can remember having this type book for kids. It had examples of all forms of lettering, mostly bubble lettering and techniques. From then on, I would take books out of the local library on advertising type and other old specimen books. In retrospect, it was kind of a weird and nerdy thing to be interested in at that age. And then, oddly enough, I didn't even take one type class when I was in art school.

**How does typography differ from other media?**

I think the huge problem with it is that, by nature and sheer definition, it's too literal. There are only so many levels of abstraction with it. You can't get more literal than type.

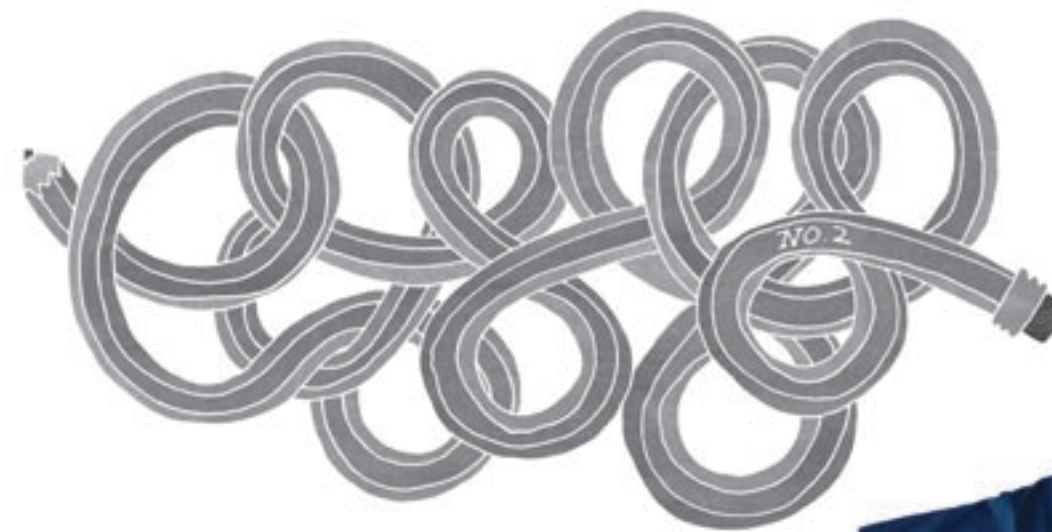
**Who are your influences?**

Lately I have been really interested in the sensibility of [British graphic designer] Alan Fletcher's work. Visually, I'm not sure how much of his work informs what I do, but there is always a level of experimentation with what he did and

that is something I always include in my process. I try to push more of a sensibility than a style. I am pretty sure that's why folk art is a huge influence in my work. Folk art can look drastically different from culture to culture, but it almost always has a similar sensibility. The combination of the carefree gestures, naïve palettes, and universal concepts is just really attractive to me—there's something unmistakably human about it.

**What is your favorite album cover and why?**

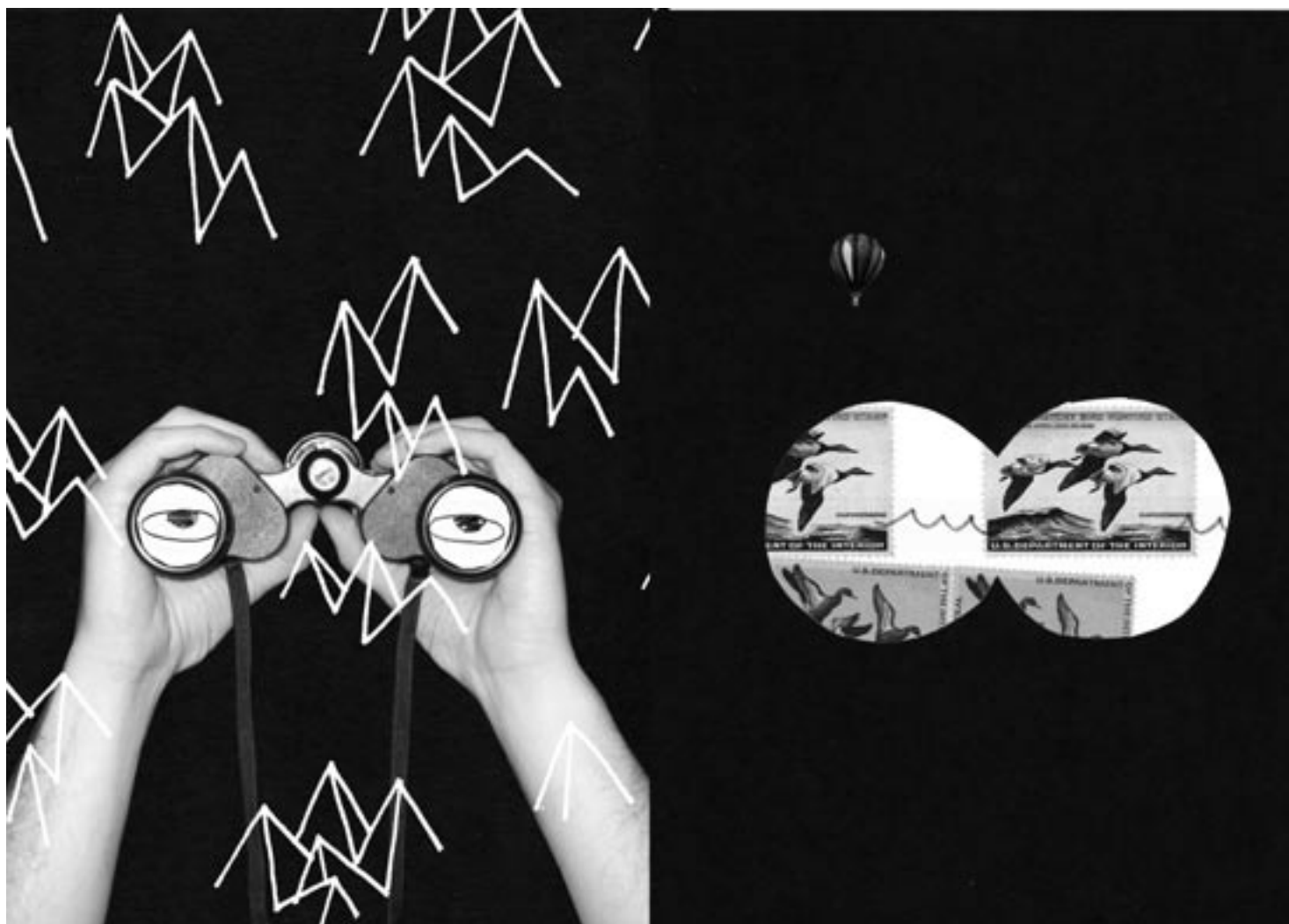
I think it would have to be The Beatles'



above:  
(clockwise)  
No. 2,  
It's Nice To Be Nice  
tee, 2007;  
Heavy Rock  
Spectacular, 2008;  
Tastemaker tee  
for Sixpack, 2007







*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band.* I'm a big fan of Sir Peter Blake's collage work. I would also have to put Peter Gabriel's 1978 self-titled [album] up there as well—the one with the “scratch.” Such a simple, yet beautiful cover. Storm Thorgerson, who designed that cover, also created a bunch of other iconic covers including *Dark Side of the Moon!*

#### Does what you do feel like a job?

It's my dream job, but it is *totally* a job. I love working, so whenever I get a free moment from “working” I am working on something else. I'm still trying to play around with

things and experiment and establish myself as an artist, so most of the time I am trying out new ideas or techniques. But when I legitimately take a break, I love getting lost in used bookstores and flea markets. My dad used to drag me to all of these Amish flea markets as a kid and I never enjoyed them at the time. But now, to me, just wandering around with only the possibility of stumbling upon something unexpected can be kind of amazing.

#### What would you do if you had unlimited time?

I'd probably freeze up and mull over everything! As much as I hate crunching for time, I thrive on short deadlines. I think less and do more. It's a purer expression for me. I'm chockfull of self-doubt, so having a lot of time can be a detriment to my process.

#### How much planning goes into a piece before you start?

Everything starts with a sketch. If it doesn't, it goes nowhere. When working on a new piece, I usually make a bunch of elements by hand and then assemble them, either in

*above:*  
*Over There*  
spread in *Mikasa*  
zine, 2007

*opposite page:*  
*Then, Now and*  
*Then*, 2008



the computer or as a traditional collage. Once I get to the point of assembling, it gets super-loose. This is where I really start to refine the concept by adding or taking away things on the fly. Improvisation is huge for me, but I need to first set up constraints to work with.

#### What do you listen to while you work?

Some days, it's dance music, some days it is psych-rock, some days it is No Wave. Lately I have been really into the new Cut Copy record and that Lykke Li record, and the new Ruby Suns album. MGMT's is really good and I have also reluctantly come around to Crystal

Castles. But I'll have days where I burn through the entire Kinks discography or listen to back-to-back Diplo mixes.

#### Doing so much commercial work under your own name, do you find it hard to express yourself in your personal work?

I deal with this whole commercial-versus-personal dilemma at least once a day. The division of work isn't simply black and white. Doing a lot of illustration work, I get to play around and experiment as if I were doing my own work, but it is the subject matter that's not mine. When I figure out some new things or

get some new ideas, that's great. But there are situations where I end up burning good ideas for an illustration project instead of a personal project. It's all relative.

#### What's your biggest pet peeve in art and design?

It is really important, as a maker, to know your influences. I always think it is a shame when a young designer or artist can't pinpoint what movement, period, or artists have inspired them. Fads and styles come and go so fast it seems much easier to replicate than go back and see what may have inspired these second- or third-generation aesthetics.

To read more from this interview, visit [XLR8R.com/11Bextras](http://XLR8R.com/11Bextras).

TBC

# The Big Picture

Decoding fact from fiction in the age of the digital image.

Words Ken Taylor



It's a commonly accepted truth in the world of advertising that if you tell people they need something enough, they'll eventually believe it; if you continually reinforce the idea that a man might choose to drink a Budweiser rather than bed a swimsuit model, something trips off inside his brain that allows that possibly to enter, and fantasy begins to blur with reality. Digital imagery has only made that line fuzzier, says photographer Chris Kitze, whose book, *The Electric Image* (powerHouse; hardcover, \$40), explores the collision of the real and virtual worlds. Here Kitze explains a bit of the science and psychology behind the ones and zeroes.

**XLR8R:** You say that it wasn't until the advent of digital imagery that the ubiquity of large-scale photo-realistic ad images was made possible. But haven't we always been inundated by billboards?

Chris Kitze: If you look at outdoor advertising, digital production has made it possible to globally reproduce images in much greater fidelity than [before], and the scale is monumental. In the not-so-distant past, billboards were painted by artists and definitely had a different, cartoonish or caricatured look. Retouching techniques using digital technology create virtual images that were very difficult to create using analog techniques... The difference is the hyper-realism of the imaging produced by digital technology—these are charged images by themselves. You knew the painted billboards referenced the original [thing]; we want to believe that the digital images are the original. People seem to have bought into this magic act... We have come to accept the virtual as real and vice versa. The apparent richness of the digital image creates a greater seduction and charged effect, which, for advertisers, makes

digital more compelling... Before digital, you might have seen small panels on a bus with images; now, the entire bus has been turned into an ad. It's as though the wristwatch is driving down the road.

### The images in the book are catalogued with long strings of numbers and letters. Why?

These strings of letters and numbers are identifiers for each file. It's called a SHA-1—a computer code that generates a nearly unique ID for each file. If I have two files and the generated codes match exactly, it is very nearly certain that the files are identical. What's significant about this is the way files can be nearly infinitely and exactly duplicated, much like the imagery in the ads, so to that extent it talks to originality and reproduction, key issues of photography. I wanted to distill the image down to what appears to be a meaningless string of numbers and letters and hint at yet another representation of

the image, much like a photograph of a photograph.

### What do you think is happening to the way we process multiple layers of images in "noisy" settings like, say, Times Square?

It may seem confusing, but these places really force the spectator to try to take in this visual overload and because many of us live this way all the time, we have come to expect it. There is no escape. After the initial shock and awe of multitudes of images in a place like Times Square, things settle down and you start to notice smaller, more digestible things where you filter things out and create meaning. You walk around and become aware of the virtual world we inhabit.

*The Electric Image* is out now from powerHouse Books. [powerhousebooks.com](http://powerhousebooks.com)

To read the full interview with Chris Kitze, visit [XLR8R.com/118extras](http://XLR8R.com/118extras).

XLR8R (ISSN 1526-4246) is published monthly with bi-monthly issues in January/February and July/August for \$20 a year by Amalgam Media, Inc., 425 Divisadero Street #203A, San Francisco, CA 94117. Periodicals Postage Paid at San Francisco, CA and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to XLR8R, 1388 Haight Street, #105, San Francisco, CA 94117.

# Live Freely

party at caleb's this sat

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brb

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sup?

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